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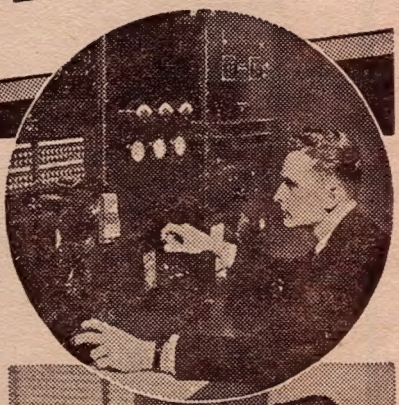

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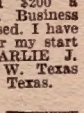

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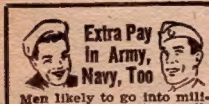

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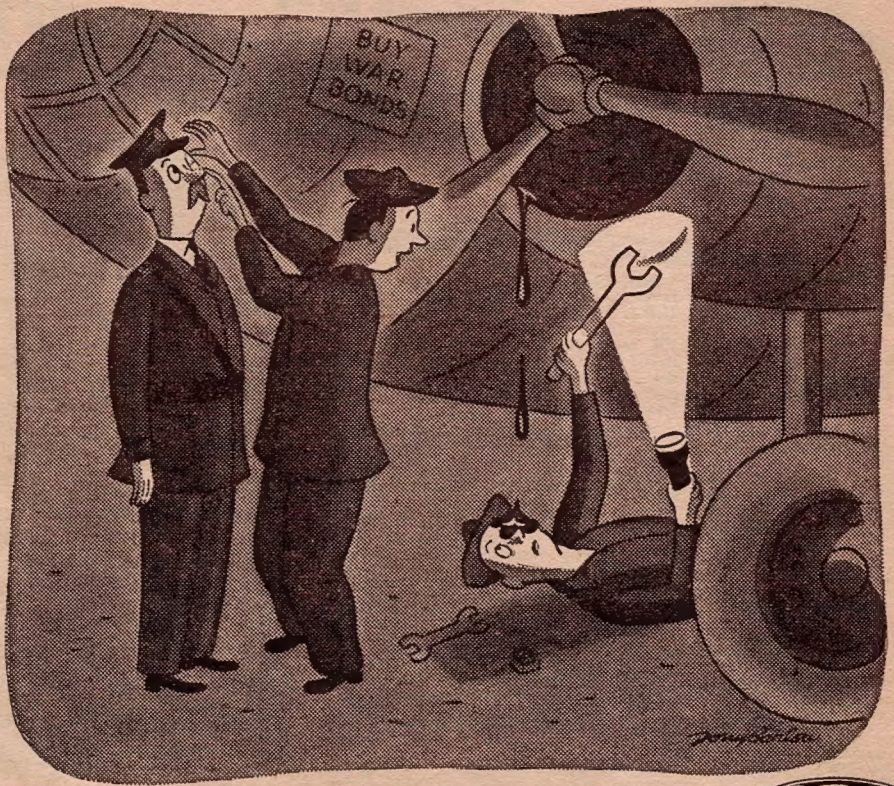

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Vol. 108, No. 6 for April, 1943 Best of New Stories

Last Boat from Zamboanga (1st of 2 parts) . . E. HOFFMANN PRICE 8
"These aren't my islands, blast them!" Kane cursed as he plowed his way through the steaming jungle. Then out of the blue swooped a Zero pocked with the rising sun and spitting death at random. Five furious seconds and, "Perhaps I've a stake in their destiny after all," he decided.

Recognition Signal . . . . . FRANK RICHARDSON PIERCE 31
There's nothing new under the sun—even in naval strategy. Take, for instance, the destroyer that fought like a Western six-gun sheriff.

The Deserter (a novelette) . . . . . GEORGES SURDEZ 34
Old Man Koppel of the Legion proves in Oran one night that you can't make a dog out of a cat or a German out of an Alsatian.

The Cadet Store Coat . . . . . FRANK W. EBEY 51
West Point's class of '61 may not have been unanimous in their politics but they all remembered the words of Lee, their commandant, about duty being the most sublime word in the English language.

Polar Pilgrimage (a fact story) . . . . . WILLIAM P. SCHRAMM 56
When Andy Bahr started out to herd 3000 reindeer 1800 miles across the top of the world he never guessed a four-year trek stretched ahead of him.

For Drinking Men Only! (an off-the-trail story) . JAMES VALE DOWNIE 62
Farmer Pell was a barn-swallower . . . Colonel Caskey, a sipper . . . Senator Maitland drank for his health and Josephine, the cat, never touched the stuff. It was quite a binge they had in the Temple of Juno Tavern.

A Pretty Smart Greek . . . . . HAL G. EVARTS 82
Stavros could have lost that *Luftwaffe* lieutenant in the labyrinth any time he chose—but there were other more satisfying ways to kill a German.

The Wild 'Un . . . . . DAVID KEITH-NEWELL 90
It was a hell of a way for an outlaw to die—even if he did have his boots on—with a pair of moccasins in his hand.

The Anchor from Murmansk . . . . . BEN MERSON 100
It wasn't gospel but Captain Wyncoop of the *Scylla* had only one answer to the enemy who smote him on both cheeks—"Kick him in the bilge!"

Contraband . . . . . HOWARD MAIER 107
Rennert was blind but he'd see again—when the sun rose in the west.

Slaptail Bill . . . . . MONTGOMERY M. ATWATER 110
Every meat eater of the wilderness ravened for his flesh—including man.

The Camp-Fire . . . . . Where readers, writers and adventurers meet 117

Ask Adventure . . . . . Information you can't get elsewhere 124

The Trail Ahead . . . . . News of next month's issue 128

Lost Trails . . . . . Where old paths cross 6

Cover painted for Adventure by Charles DeFeo *Kenneth S. White, Editor*

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LOST TRAILS

NOTE: We offer this department to readers who wish to get in touch again with friends or acquaintances separated by years or chance. Give your own name and full address. Please notify *Adventure* immediately should you establish contact with the person you are seeking. Space permitting, each inquiry addressed to *Lost Trails* will be run in three consecutive issues. Requests by and for women are declined, as not considered effective in a magazine published for men. *Adventure* also will decline any notice that may not seem a sincere effort to recover an old friendship, or for any other reason in the judgment of the editorial staff. No charge is made for publication of notices.

Alvin U. Hodgdon, known as "Tex Ranger" was last heard of in Minnesota headed for either Chicago or New York. Age 44, he travels around playing a guitar and singing. Anyone knowing of his whereabouts please communicate with his brother-in-law, Pfc. Lee Kay, c/o *Adventure.*

Any information about my old friend, Peter Battleshiel, would be appreciated. We were in the army together several years. He is French-Canadian, about 47 years old and, I believe, lives in or near Detroit. Please communicate with Laurence J. Brown, RFD No. 2, Harrisburg, Ark.

Everett Ruess, 27, cowboy artist and writer, formerly of Los Angeles, last seen in St. Petersburg, Fla., May 1935. Anyone having information of whereabouts please communicate with Burton Bowen, VAF 2, Bath, N. Y.

Anyone knowing the whereabouts of Arthur Leo Messier, last seen about ten years ago in New York City and now believed in the West, please write Charles H. Hoffmann, c/o Veterans Hospital, Tucson, Ariz.

Any information concerning Doug Hayward, age 23, last residing in Chambersburg, Pa., will be most welcome and appreciated by Pvt. Peter Dunsky, c/o *Adventure.*

Any information as to the whereabouts of Elmer McMann, last heard of in Mt. Pleasant, Texas 16 years ago, will be appreciated by his son, Charles McMann, Box B, Florence, Ariz.

Would like to find my brothers Leslie and Allan Towns, last heard from in Winnipeg, Can. many years ago. Leslie is a World War veteran. If anyone knows their whereabouts, or their children, please inform W. J. Towns, Box 2460, Globe, Ariz.

Herbert A. Roig, known to be in California about 1929 and to be living in Houston, Tex. about 1939. Age 41, height 5-10, weight 150, gray eyes, light brown hair. Information about him will be appreciated by his friend Frank Landon, 1146 Webster St., San Francisco, Cal.

Wanted: information about W. D. (Will) Burnett, last heard from in Phoenix, Ariz. He is about six feet, weight 185 lbs. Tattoo on chest and one arm. Was in army 1919-20. Please write his friend C. B. Morgan, R. R. #2, Durant, Okla.

Don A. Ellis and I were buddies up till the time he enlisted in Coast Artillery about June 1939. Last heard from him in Aug. '41 when he was attending Bakers and Cooks School, Ft. Slocum, N. Y. a member of 5th C. A. If he, or anyone knowing his whereabouts, reads this, please write Pfc. Roy P. Whitton, c/o *Adventure.*

Robert Lee Johnson, 52, last heard of at Barron, Wis. in 1911. Prior to that had been at Leishman's Camp, Mile 48, A.C.R.R., had worked in railroad shops at Cape Girardeau, Mo. and on section at Barron, Wis. Later in Cal., Ariz., N. M. Talked of going to Alaska or South America. Anyone having knowledge of his whereabouts write P. O. Box 684, Oklahoma City, Okla.

Chas. Powell (Paul), supposed to be in or near Monroe, Fla., and last heard from in 1924 or '26, please communicate with Fred C. Powell, Box 1241, Reno, Nev.

Norman Rankin, 19, born in Glasgow, Scotland, resided in Brooklyn, N. Y., until 1934, last heard from at N. 3rd St., Philadelphia, Pa. Any information would be appreciated by Norman Bersin, 2/cl., U.S.N., c/o *Adventure.*

Anyone who knew William Henry Davis in Piedmont, Mo., in the years 1898-1900, please write to his son, Cecil G. Davis, 4522 Corliss St., Los Angeles, Cal.

Is General R. L. Hearn (Lo Sze Han), formerly Commander-in-Chief of Manchurian Irregulars of Chang Tso Lin alive? Who knows? Write Kaye Hyde, Box 1731, San Francisco, Cal.

Lewis Allen Hasty who left Coffeyville, Kan., seventeen years ago would like to hear from any member of his family. Write c/o Robert E. Mahaffay, Box 684, Oklahoma City, Okla.

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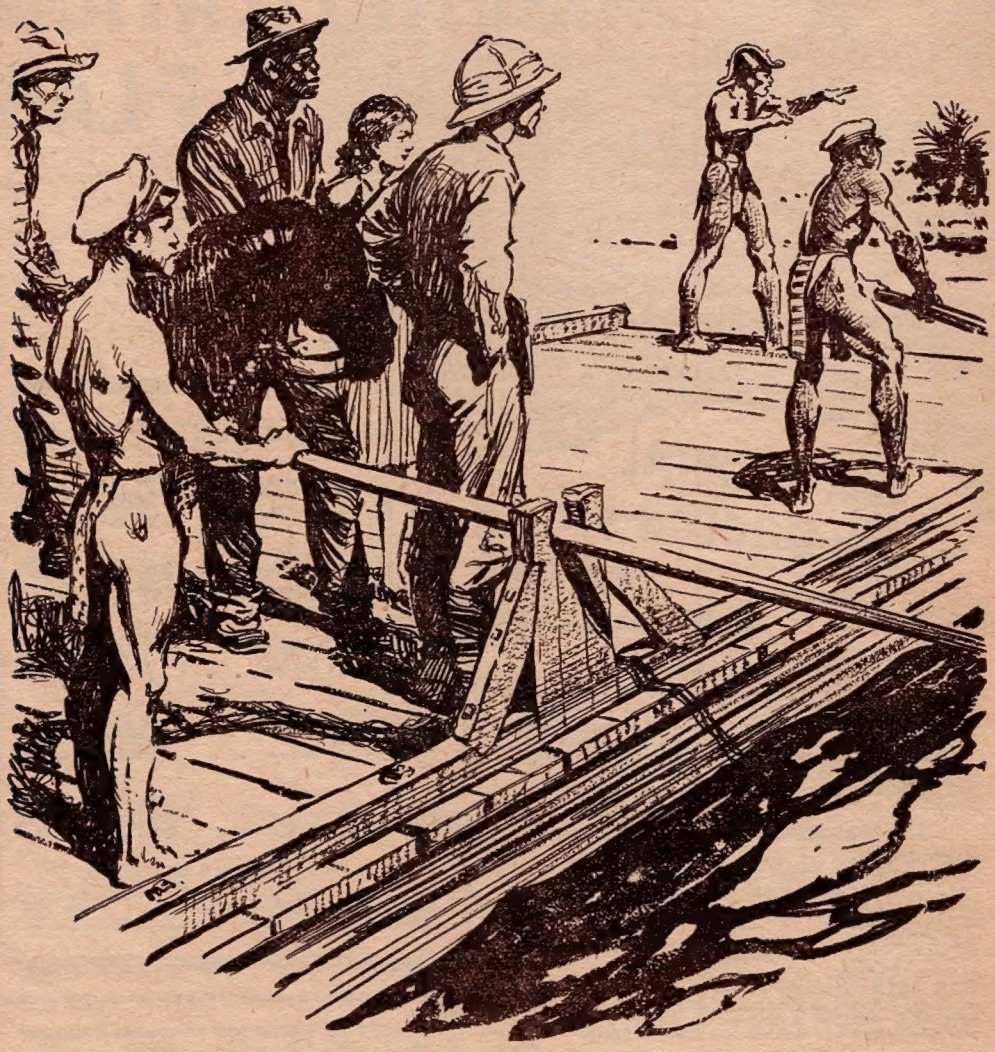


KANE sat up, cursed wrathfully, and thrust aside the patched mosquito netting which screened his cot. The darkness of the cogon-thatched survey headquarters was thick with the smoke of the smudges which the Manobo porters kept going all night to discourage the buzzing pests. Whirling thoughts, however, rather than swarming insects, were what kept Kane awake. One could not sleep on the eve of liberation.

He took a reef in the broad flannel band wrapped about his middle, very much like a Japanese *obi*. Keep your head cool and your stomach warm,

ILLUSTRATED
BY
I. B. HAZELTON

The horseman reined in. "I am General Datu Ryan," he announced. "And these are my wives. Welcome to the capital."

they'd told him. But now he was shivering from the sweat-drenched pajamas which had become cold and clammy; the elevation behind Mount Ampaoid was enough to make the nights cool.

With some effort, he fumbled for his straw-soled slippers, then gulped a gourd dipper of water, and spat out a drowned insect. A glance at the luminous dial of his wrist watch told him that it was earlier than he had believed possible.

Kane was tall and angular, and thinner than he should have been. The kerosene lantern, throwing his shadow on the grass-thatched wall, exaggerated his leanness, and his uncertain step. Either he had dozed, or else quinine had dizzied him. Kane was not quite sure whether quinine, or mosquitoes made the damnable buzzing in his ears.

As he wove into the field office, which adjoined his sleeping room, he said aloud, "Why wait five years to give it back to the Filipinos?"

Kane spent much of his time monologuing, so that he would not forget his own language. The English that Romero and Garcia spoke had that maddening island inflection. They made a different tongue of it, as foreign as the dialect of the Manobo tribesmen.

He opened the hardwood cases of the transits, wiped the brass and the objectives, and inspected the latter for the fungus which has a particular fancy for taking root in glass, or in the balsam which cemented the lenses. There had been no change in the instruments during the four hours he had tried to sleep. Kane pulled up a stool and hunched himself over the field notes and the map which recorded his topographical survey of the country along the southern boundary of Agusan Province.

He recalculated the error of closure, and finally said, "One in seven fifty. Not bad. A good job, but it wasn't worth doing. Give the damned island back to the Filipinos right now. Why fool around till 1946?"

He thumbed a manual, and began to laugh when he came to the grimy and cigarette-burned section on error. Garcia and Romero were competent enough, but even so, accuracy was bought by gallons of sweat, and pints of blood; no amount of cunning or care could keep leeches from taking hold and fattening until they became the size of pork sausages.

Kane read, "*Small errors are more frequent than large ones.* Oh, yeah, when were you in Mindanao? *Very large errors do not occur.* What other kind do you get in this God-blasted jungle?"

Sweat trickling into the eyes. The humid air fairly boiling, so that the figures on the stadia rod leaped and blurred and twisted. Humidity making the plotting paper warp and twist. The transit tripod sinking of its own weight into the steaming soil, throwing off every level. Getting a closure of one in seven hundred and fifty was first-class work, only it had not been worth doing. Not here.

He picked up a pencil and began to sketch a Manobo house, perched high in a tree. He sketched Mr. Manobo with big ear plugs, and a gee-string, and a spear. Then various and sundry junior Manobos gawking at Mrs. Manobo cooking some outrageous mess in her most prized utensil, a bacon can. Finally, in exquisite Reinhard, he lettered, *WHY WAIT TILL '46? IF THE JAPS WANT THE ISLAND THEY ARE NUTS. SO ARE THE FILIPINOS. SIGNED: JAMES F. KANE, THE CHUMP WHO MADE THE MAP.*

He shivered, took some quinine. When he got to the coast, he would get stinking drunk. Let them pour him into the boat at Davao, tranship him at Zamboanga, and dump him into a clipper at Manila. He'd freeze to death anywhere in the States, which would be a treat. Mindanao in December was so nearly like Mindanao in July that only a meteorologist knew the difference.

Eighty-five percent humidity meant that you could not quite squeeze water out of a handful of air. He began to quote from memory, "*When water gets between the lenses, take them out of the telescope and carefully dry them over a lamp flame or other gentle heat. . .*"

Kane pulled up his pajama leg and picked off a thumb-sized leech which had somehow found a fresh spot on his scarred shin. He grinned amiably as he squashed the creature into the floor. Surveying costs blood and sweat, too. Just like Churchill said about war. And what for?

He thought maybe he could sleep a little now. Cursing the islands always helped. And he needed rest before starting that march to Davao.

Once more under the mosquito netting, he began reciting, "*The probable error is that error which is as likely as not to be exceeded.*" This was better than counting carabao, or Manobos. Less than a hundred repetitions, and he had achieved the hinterland's approximation of sleep. The snoring in the adjacent shack, of José Garcia, axeman, and Florencio Romero, rodman, may have helped.

AT dawn of December fifteenth, Kane and his party, followed by cargadores who carried the instruments and equipment, headed south for a bath, a

square meal, a newspaper, and the sound of radio. The battery of the portable set had taken sick and died some sixty days previous. But he had not missed much. Hitler probably was not in Moscow. And how did that heel like Russian winters? And why didn't he try invading Mindanao . . .?

The trail along which Kane rode his runty pony wound through tall stands of *lauan,* through cane brakes and bamboo; and there were broad stretches of cogon grass as high as his head. The stalks were finger thick, the blades knife-edged. And stretches of plateau were seamed by deep canyons which compelled long detours. It was not until the beginning of the fourth day that he reached the hemp plantations, with their broad-leaved *abacá,* towering twenty feet or more, and looking for all the world like banana plants, even to their inedible fruit.

But there were no brown men cutting the stalks. None stripped the tough fiber, nor were there any laborers bending double under bundles bound for the baler. Probably another fiesta, Kane told himself. It was Romero, the smooth-faced rodman, who got the answer as they passed an outlying village.

"They say there is war," Romero translated. "The Japs. Landing at Aparri, Lingayen, all over, marching on Manila. Japs landed at Pearl Harbor. At Guam."

Beetle browed Garcia's little eyes gleamed, and his broad nostrils twitched. *"Ay, cabrones chingados!"* He made cutting gestures with his hand, a bolo stroke, as he let his cursing run into Tagalog and Filipino-English. "They'll all be killed off before we can get there, me and Romero."

Kane raised his Stetson and mopped his forehead. "I wouldn't worry. There'll be plenty left for you."

Axeman and rodman eyed him, appraised him. Kane was standing Mindanao better than many Americans they had seen. He paced at night, and sometimes he was brusque; he had tried their patience, time and again, by rerunning a traverse: as if it made any difference whether the closure was one in five hundred or one in a thousand! Still and all, they were proud of the job they had done, now that it was over. So Garcia proposed, "You go with us to the army. They will make us officers, all of us. We have education, no?"

The cargadores now had the news, and they chattered in their mountain gibberish. Kane, catching only a few words, knew that the pagans, like the two Luzon men, were all aquiver at the thought of war; though the former saw the whole business in terms of bushwhacking, using their bolos on Japanese hemp farmers. The good old days were back again, and head-hunting would cease to be a vice.

Kane was thinking, "So it's war . . . at last. . ." He was not surprised at anything except his own lack of reaction. There should have been a moment of dismay, followed by the thrill of decision; but his pulse hardly stepped up a beat as the next thought took shape: "It'll be roundabout, going home to join up. Head for Java. Then Australia. But someone's nuts! They couldn't have barged into Pearl Harbor."

Romero and Garcia still waited for his answer. Though itching for action, they knew that Kane always pondered before he spoke, which, after all, was doubtless proper.

He wanted to tell them, "These aren't my islands. They're not worth fighting for or about," but after months in the jungle with these men, he could give them no such answer, so he said, "Wait till we get more news. If the Japs are landing in Honolulu, I've got to head for San Francisco. My home is on the coast, you know."

Though disappointed, they accepted Kane's logic, and did not remind him of the American regiments in the Manila area, or the detachment in the central islands. But Kane, thinking of these outfits and of the roundabout route to the States, had to repeat to himself, "They aren't my islands. My job is at home."

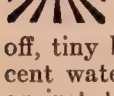
To Kane's right front, Mount Apo, chalky white above the timber line, rose nearly ten thousand feet over the sea. "Blow your top," he said to the sacred volcano of the Bagobos, "and quit looking like Fujiyama!"

That was the crowning touch of the Jap town toward which he rode. Davao, with its 20,000 skibbies, had even a reasonable facsimile of Fuji! For more than twenty years, no Jap had been legally able to own or lease Philippine land, yet in that period, they had taken over the entire area along Davao Bay. It was simple enough: marry a native woman, trick or persuade a Bagobo or Manobo to act as dummy owner of a hemp plantation. Belatedly, the government had sent landless Filipinos to Mindanao to take up homesteads and block further infiltration by Mr. Moto. Kane tried to picture a town with most of its population interned. Better pitch a circus tent over Davao and make one big concentration camp of it.

And then send for the hill tribes with their heavy choppers!

That night, they camped at a barrio on the river. Kane got more news, the kind which lengthened his face. Hong Kong was besieged. MacArthur's gallant little army was hemmed in, crowded by three Japanese columns which converged on Manila. Two British battleships had been sunk, in Malayan waters, and a Jap column was driving toward Singapore. Kane's choice of routes home was simplified: detour by way of Australia was the only way. It would take a magician to join the American regiments in the islands.

Too damn bad that American soldiers were trapped in Luzon.



GUNFIRE awakened Kane at dawn. Planes streaked out to meet ships which steamed into the bay, a swarm of far-off, tiny black spots against the opalescent water. Shrapnel made white puffs against the sky. At first, Kane could separate the artillery blasts from the cough of shell bursts, but presently the sounds blended with the riveting-hammer rattle of machine guns.

When he had counted forty ships, smoke surged across the water, blacking out the approaching transports and cruisers.

The Japanese dream of twenty years was opposed only by a handful of Philippine soldiers and constabulary. Above the grumble and the booming and the drumming, he heard the siren scream of a bomber peeling off and diving at one of the obscured targets. As it swooped up, a tall column of flame and oily black smoke gushed after it. Then, seconds later, the prolonged rumble and thunder of the cruiser's exploding magazines reached into the hills.

Sighting through the transit telescope, Kane picked narrow slices out of the broad, fiery front, saw wave after wave of barges put out from the distant transports. Philippine artillery peppered them, blasted them, tore their bottoms out, until the water was dotted with Japs, some swimming with packs and rifles, others floating without direction. Machine-gun fire chewed the first landing party to shreds, until the beach seemed scattered with grotesque little rag dolls.

But though every other barge was blown apart, the second wave did reach the shore, and the landing troops scrambled over their riddled comrades of the first wave. A light tank wallowed out to meet them, hosed them with slugs, then slowly mashed them into the sand as it wheeled to parallel the shore, moving toward the blind spot where a barge, unhampered by Filipino fire, had discharged its party.

Kane got out his 30/06 sportster, and the Remington twelve-gauge which had kept the survey party in game. "I'm not hungry," he said. "Let's go hunting. Florencio, you and José match for the shotgun."

The rodman shook his head. "She kick too much. I do not understand guns." He picked up a broad-bladed bolo, flicked it with the native's inborn skill; it would take many generations of B.S. degrees in the Romero clan to wipe out that love of steel. "This I understand. From the agricultural school."

"But the maps and instruments?" Garcia asked, picking up the shotgun.

Kane hated to abandon a good transit quite aside from the fact that it was government property. But he shrugged off that qualm and in a few minutes the surveying party set out on horse, starting what was for them a novel reconnaissance.

Though hemp groves cut off the view and muffled the detonations, an earth-shaking explosion and the scream of fragments told Kane that the cruisers were shelling Davao. Looking back, he saw brown men in beaded red jackets cutting across the plantations. Some had head axes, others carried lances, in addition to heavy blades in carved wooden scabbards. The Bagobos were turning out, silently and murderously.

Presently flame and smoke rose above the hemp. By the time Kane got a view of the Jap plantation house, there was no sound but the chatter of the looters. One had a phonograph, another a mirror, others had utensils. Kane had not expected the niceties of civilized warfare, yet he was shocked when he saw the collection of heads.

But some minutes later, not far from Davao Town, he learned that his qualms had been wasted. He had scarcely rounded a curve in the road when a ragged volley whacked out from a thicket. Bullets tugged at his shirt, plucked off his hat. His horse screamed, stumbled, and pitched with him into the ditch. Romero's mount, bolting, piled him in the middle of the road. The rodman tried to get up but could not. There was no telling what had happened to Garcia.

TOO late, Kane realized the error of assuming that all was clear behind the lines. He had committed the one unpardonable military sin, that of being taken by surprise. Pulling himself up from the ditch, he got another look at Romero. There was blood on the road. The man was moving now that the shock of landing had worn off.

To those in ambush, it looked like a clean sweep. They broke cover: not soldiers, but Jap farmers wearing shorts, unbuttoned military tunics, and visored caps. One was grizzled, far beyond military age; several were scarcely over fourteen or fifteen. These, digging out the rifles and uniforms they had smuggled in and saved against the great day, were now doing their bit for the Mikado. One clumsily fixed a bayonet and laughed, and pointed at Romero. He meant, "Fun spearing him!"

The play spirit swept the ragtag squad. Like Kane, they were not soldiers. And in their turn, they were caught off guard.

Just as Kane thrust his sportster through the grass to pick off the amiable chap who wanted to harpoon the fallen rodman, Romero bounded up. His yell reached a frantic pitch. Perhaps the sound, perhaps the unexpectedness of the move confused the Japs. Several jerked wild shots. The one presenting his bayonet made a futile, clumsy jab. He had not spent enough time evenings drilling.

Romero worked by instinct. Kane heard the *chunk* of the bolo biting home. The little man seemed surrounded by a veil of steel as he danced in, performing his devil's ballet; he slashed up, down, sidewise, backhand. Two on the fringe yelled and started for the hemp grove when Kane bounced from cover. He halted, fired once, watched his man roll over like a rabbit.

Then a shotgun boomed. Garcia, the tail of the procession, had used his head. Chilled shot fairly dissolved one fugitive at close range. The battle was over. Romero grinned, choked a little, and collapsed over the carved huddle about his ankles. A dying man had done more damage than two uninjured.

They eyed each other, and turned away from Romero. Kane said, "We'd better stay off the road. How many shells you got?"

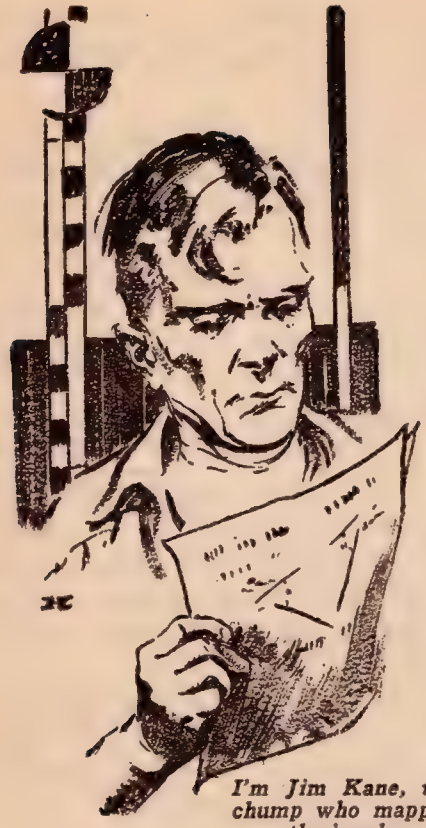
Garcia dug into his pockets. "These five. The rest went with the horse."

"Then pick up a Jap rifle and all the cartridges you can."

"How many cartridges have you?"

"What's left of a box of twenty," Kane said. "But if we meet scouts or constabulary, it's O. K., their ammunition fits this gun."

They met no more Jap militia, except a harmless few who had been ambushed by pagan tribesmen. Meanwhile, the shelling became heavier. There were more planes in the air, and they had the rising sun on their wing tips. Refugees began to jam the road which Kane skirted. Creaking carts drawn by carabaos lumbered along at two miles an hour. Pony carts, loaded with luggage



I'm Jim Kane, the chump who mapped the jungle.

and packed with passengers, threaded through the tangle of pedestrians: Filipinos and Chinese, the minority population of Davao, were heading for the hills.

After the first dense wave came stragglers who ran, stumbled, picked themselves up again. The wind sweeping inland was thick with nitrous fumes, the odor of burning wood, and of copra blazing in warehouses. An old man, pausing to rest, said to Kane, "*Señor,* there is no use, more and more are landing, the beach is thick with their dead, but the others come on and on, there is not enough army and too many Japs."

Bullets whacked the hedges and tree tops. The ground shuddered from the uninterrupted explosions of five-inch shells from the cruisers. The rifle fire was no longer steady. There were sharp bursts, a frantic rattling, then a lull. An ambulance jounced along the rutted road. Supply trucks followed. Then came columns of grim brown men, all sweaty and some wounded. Kane, seeing this, began to understand why artillery pounded so heavily from the hills behind the town, and why the machine guns and rifles opened up, rattled, went silent again. The rear guard was delaying the Jap pursuit.

"Jig's up, José. We're too late for the party."

The little axeman grinned. "Plenty more. In the hills."

A Filipino captain saw the two who crouched beside the road, and stepped from the head of his company. "Do you understand motors?" he asked Kane.

"Somewhat, but not enough to hurt. Why?"

"There is an old man—an American—a mile back. Beside the road. He has trouble. So have we, or we could help. Maybe you can get him started."

"I'm game to try. How much time have I?"

The captain's grin was twisted. "Not enough. The ——s are crowding us. It will be bad when they break through with tanks. Bad for civilians, I mean."

"Thanks, captain, and good luck."

Garcia said, "Maybe I can help you?"

Kane shook his head. "What I know about motors isn't worth a dime, and I think you are in the same fix. About all the good I can do is guide the old man into the hills until he conks out. It is a very bum bet, José." He thrust out his hand. "Thanks, and good luck."

Garcia lapsed into Spanish. "*Vaya con Dios, amigo.* Me, I am going up to join the captain's company, he looks like a good officer."

Kane watched his axeman trot after the column. And as he tramped down the road, he was sure that he was the loneliest man in Mindanao. Except maybe the old man with the balky motor.

CHAPTER II

A QUESTION OF TIMING

THE longer the rear guard could keep on with its street fighting and its bushwhacking of advance units, the better chance the outnumbered Filipino troops

would have of reorganizing. Then, when the Pacific fleet steamed from Honolulu —Kane could not believe that crazy yarn about Pearl Harbor having been caught off guard as hopelessly as he and his survey party had, a few hours earlier—all this nonsense would end, and between pagan tribesmen and army and constabulary, every Jap in the province would be interned or wiped out, preferably the latter. Ever since he had been ambushed by fifth columnists, Kane had begun to see a certain beauty in the methods of the red-jacketed Bagobos.

Stumbling pedestrians eyed him as if he were a madman. Some pointed and muttered about the crazy American going back to stop the Japs. Others, more reasonable according to their lights, said he had gone *jurmentado*: having lost face, he was turning back to wipe out as many invaders as he could until they finished him.

It was the longest mile Kane had ever walked. In comparison with this coastal plain, the plateau behind Mount Ampaoid was a summer resort, and he wondered why he had ever cursed leeches. In spite of anti-aircraft which still kept the air loaded with shrapnel, Jap planes were swooping and diving, machine-gunning the retreating column. The soldiers would duck for cover; the ambulances, the supply trucks, and the civilians jammed into carabao carts would catch hell.

Kane flung himself at the roots of a coco palm, just as the vibrant scream of a plane warned him of the slugs which would chew the highway. He won with a second to spare. A moment later, streaking back for more ammunition, the rising sun tangled with some nicely bracketed shrapnel, and went down in a spiral of smoke.

Good gunnery, only not enough of it.

Nothing but stubbornness kept him heading toward Davao; that, and the feeling that since he had not joined Garcia's captain, he had to carry on until he verified his conviction about the old man and the stalled car. If both were not bullet-peppered, then miracles were happening in Mindanao. "And I can swim to Australia," he added, sourly.

Then, a hundred yards from the overhead strafing, he heard the most distinguished cursing the English language afforded. It surged into sonorous Spanish, with overtones of Chinese and Tagalog. The words, which Kane, a novice, could not understand, carried in their mere sound an impact which made him think of the high fury of minor prophets.

"Diane, step on that —— —— ——— starter again!"

"Dad, you'll wear the battery out," an unruffled voice protested. "Using the starter to roll her off the road was bad enough."

So that was how they had gotten under cover. Kane stretched his legs, and swung into a drive which led through half a mile of coconut palms.

ALL Kane saw of the fierce old man was the seat of his pants as he bent over the motor of an ancient Packard phaeton; then he turned to the red-haired girl at the wheel and asked, "What's the trouble?"

"Sabotage, if you ask me!" And she was able to laugh. For a moment, the weariness left her greenish gray eyes. Diane was the first white woman Kane had seen since he left Zamboanga, yet, despite the dust, and the grease smudge on her pert nose, she would have been lovely in a town packed with white women.

Her father jerked upright, hooked greasy thumbs in the waistband of his once white pants. "Mister, don't tell me you know anything about these damn things! You're taking your time getting out of town. Maybe we might as well walk too."

Kane set his rifle against the running-board.

"How was the hunting?" Diane asked him.

Now, looking sharply, he could see the tremor of her lip. "Pretty good, back there." He gestured toward the hills. "But better, here."

The hatchet-faced man demanded, "You mean you're heading toward that madhouse?"

"Uh-uh. Filipino captain told me you

were stalled. What's the trouble? Maybe I can do some guessing."

"Damned if I know. Plenty gas. Knocked the Jap on the head just as he finished tanking up. There's a spark, all right." The old man picked up a loosened cable. "Diane, step on that starter."

She did so and a blue flash crackled from cable to block.

"Fuel line plugged?" Kane asked.

But the gas dripping from the manifold drain canceled that suggestion.

"How was she going when she conked?"

"Like a Chinese dream! Then, all of a sudden, she wouldn't pull the hat off your head. Luckily, we coasted to this drive, and the starter rolled her off the road."

"Sounds like the timing chain jumped a couple teeth."

The man groaned. "Then we walk. So you came back, did you?" He shook his head, perplexedly. "Oh, I get it. Baby, he heard there was a red-headed gal and he came back."

Kane listened to the distant popping and rumbling for a moment. There was a lull. He said, "The captain didn't mention her, so I just walked instead of running."

"I thought we'd met every white man in Davao."

"The whole eighty-three of them stepped on my feet," Diane said, "every night at the dinner dance. Where were you?"

"Back of Ampaoid. I'm Jim Kane, the chump who made a map of the jungle."

"I'm Diane Haley, and the profane old buzzard is my dad. Now if you can start this crate, he'll give you half his plantation in Zamboanga." She made a wry grimace. "All of it, in fact."

"I'll take a cigar instead." He turned to the tools which littered the running board. "So you conked the Jap that owned this?"

"With a cobblestone. I wish I'd started years earlier. Say, you can't fix a timing chain, it takes four or five hours, pulling the radiator and all the rest of the stuff in front, and then maybe the damn thing has stretched so much it won't stay put."

Kane picked up a spark plug socket wrench. "I'm going to try a gag I saw an emergency service man use, back home. Get out and push. And leave it in high."

Diane and her father stared at him until he added, "The valves are out of time with the ignition. But they can be finagled back into step, without taking the whole works down. It's just push and grunt and guess, and if you have any religion, pray for the rear guard to hang on." He turned to Haley. "Sorry, but unless you can guess better than I do, you don't get the soft job."

He lifted the distributor head and unlocked the shaft. As the girl and her father bucked the heavy car against compression, Kane watched the one exposed valve rise, and saw how far the spark was out of time.

There were no more fugitives on the road, nor any soldiers; but the fierce crackling of rifles was coming nearer, nearer, in that stubborn, foot-by-foot, rear-guard action. The shelling had ceased, nor was there any anti-aircraft fire. Sweat drenched Kane, and then chills shook him. That was when he thought of the demolition squads which should soon come up the road to destroy bridges. If the car were not in order quickly, he was wasting time that would better be spent in hoofing for Mount Apo.

He had to raise his voice now to make Diane and her father hear him when he called, "All right, shove again, about a foot!"

He no longer got the sound of feet slipping on the shell paved drive. The old man gasped, the girl sobbed from her exertion. The heavy car inched forward, seven of its big cylinders adding their opposition. Kane nudged the distributor, and watched the exposed valve-seating.

"Give her another! If you can."

They did. Fingers trembling, Kane fumbled the spark plug into place, and clamped the distributor head. "If this—"

"Oh, it's going to work!" Diane cried, voice cracking.

Kane gulped, choked, straightened up. "Step on the starter."

When the grinding was followed by a sputter, a backfire, then a steady drumming, he sighed, doubled up, and tried to keep his stomach from rising to his throat.

"Take it, Dad," Diane said, "I'm too shaky."

Kane lurched for his rifle, which he flung into the back seat with the tools. "Head for Bago," he said. "By the back road."

The main highway, which skirted the gulf, would beyond doubt be under Japanese fire for some kilometers. Further south, there was a chance that no landing parties were swarming from the sea.

THOUGH the lurch and jolt of the heavy car would make straight shooting impossible, Kane kept on the alert, trying to spot Jap guerrillas in the plantations which skirted the wagon trail. Planes still circled overhead; but now the firing had blended into a sullen rumble, merging with the mumble of the surf, and the deep voice of the old car, so that there was no guessing the progress of the Filipino rear-guard action. Yet they must be holding Highway One.

The barrios were deserted, except for occasional pigs and chickens. Once a carabao the size of a Durham bull blocked the road, but after glaring wrathfully at the car, he snorted, and lumbered on, heading for a pool.

Then the trail joined the paved highway, and again Kane saw the bay, and Davao. Through low-hanging fumes, barges still plied between transports and the shore. Somewhere in the green expanse of the coastal plain, the army had taken cover; whether to hold and hem in, or to counterattack, Kane could not guess.

Haley pulled up, twisted about, and shook his head. "This brute is eating enough gas for two buggies her size."

"My fault. That emergency treatment doesn't make for efficiency."

"I was hoping, with a full tank, to get to Cotabato. It's only a hundred and fifty miles. I bet there won't be a drop

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of gas left along the road anywhere."

Diane said, "How about eating? It seems to me we skipped breakfast."

They found a barrio, some kilometers down the coast, which had not been evacuated. A squawk, a bolo stroke, and a chicken was in the pot. The villagers crowded about to learn about the war; and while Haley did his best to make them understand Zamboanga dialect, Kane said to Diane, "I'm in the same fix they are. I caught a lot of garbled yarns on the run. Look here, this mess has been going on for two weeks and I never suspected it till this morning."

"We were caught in Davao," she said, "on the seventh. The constabulary got the jump on the local Jap civilians, but it was no fun, sitting there in the hotel wondering how long they'd keep the upper hand. No more boats for Zambo, nothing but Jap ships in the harbor, and they weren't going anywhere, so there we were."

Haley turned from his group of fascinated natives long enough to interpolate, "I had a hunch we'd have to leave overland, so I watched S. Higaki & Company from my window. But when the time came, we had to move so fast that grub was out of the question. And I still don't trust this bus. We'll be walking before this is over."

"I wouldn't feel at home without a transit over my shoulder," Kane said. "Now get on with the bad news."

Diane told him, and he had to believe finally that the first reports had been understatements rather than wild rumors. Japs were overrunning Sarawak, on the Borneo west coast. They had Hong Kong bottled up, and Manila was a lost hope; but for Corregidor and MacArthur, with his handful of Filipinos and Americans, the town would already have been taken over. And now, with a landing party in Davao, the thus far untouched southern islands were in danger.

Kane's jaw set. "I'm getting to the States, somehow. I am so fed up with Mindanao I'd take a chance paddling a canoe or sailing a *prahu*."

The villagers heaped a platter-shaped basket with chicken and rice, mangos and green-skinned bananas whose flesh was ripe and creamy. And some *guinamos* that made Kane want to hold his nose: small fish, floating in brine and spices, reeked their protest at delayed embalming.

None of the natives asked for a ride, which relieved Kane. Until forced out by imminent peril, they preferred to stick to their barrio and till their fields.

IT WAS not until the sun began to dip that Kane realized how little progress they had made from Davao Town; with blocked roads, motor trouble, and detours among the plantations, the distance gained was no more than brisk hiking would have done in a like period.

"We can't risk night driving," he said. "No telling what patrols they'll have in the bay."

So, off the road, they made camp. Huddled about a well-screened smudge, they fought mosquitoes. Haley seemed accustomed to the pests; Diane and Kane ended by squatting next to the smoldering heap until fatigue made them insensible to bites.

"I'm still wondering why you and your dad had to come to Davao! Don't tell me his plantation in Zambo made this Japtown a treat."

"Oh, I was born here. In Davao."

"What a time to get sentimental!" he grumbled.

"I wasn't coming back to see the old homestead. It was just to get my birth certificate, so I could go home to the States. And with the parish records all scrambled, we finally took the boat from Zambo to untangle things in person. And now look!"

"Now that you've got it, see what you can do with it."

"It used to be easy. Up until the copra business went haywire, I'd go to the States every couple of years. But when things began to tighten up, we learned that I'd have to prove my identity."

Kane nodded. "A lot of tourists were stuck in Canada for lack of papers. How about your father?"

"Oh, he's not tangled in red tape. If it hadn't been for me, we could have

left some weeks ago. Now it looks as if we're here for the duration. There had to be a war, just when Mindanao was beginning to open up, develop roads."

He eyed her, sharply. "You mean these islands could ever amount to anything? My God! Pioneering in a white man's country is one thing, but this—"

He turned to feed the smudge. The dense fumes blanketed the group. Half suffocated and totally exhausted, the two watchers curled up for a restless nap. Kane was not sure whether the smoke repelled the mosquitoes, or whether it merely acted as an anaesthetic. His backwoods camp now seemed luxurious in comparison.

Dawn, and the roar of a plane awakened the refugees. A bomber was winging from Santa Cruz toward Davao. And all around that disputed town, artillery and machine guns opened up.

"All aboard for Kidapawan, Liguasan Marshes, and Cotabato!"

Haley stretched, grimaced wryly. "Jim, you try driving. This bus steers like a truck."

So Kane took the wheel, and had to agree with the diagnosis.

But for all the early start, the road was jammed with Filipinos who apparently had been warned before the firing began. The Japs, having consolidated their position in Davao Town, now seemed to be spreading out in every direction, mopping up parties of native guerrillas, making contact with military detachments separated from their units. The implication was that as long as the hinterland was alive with hostile natives, Davao was in danger.

Or perhaps, somewhere along the inland highway, soldiers and constabulary were organizing for a counterattack. Kane could only guess as he dodged pedestrians who trudged along, women with bales and bundles balanced on their heads, men with coconut hooks, bolos, and hand-forged axes.

Some hailed him. By way of justifying his refusal, he said to Haley, "We can't pick them all up."

They had made little progress when Diane cried from the back seat, "Get off the road!"

Her voice was swallowed up by the yells of pedestrians scrambling for the roadside. And the scream of a diving plane completed the warning. Kane cut the wheel, and as he did so, he shouted, "Jump for it!"

HE FOLLOWED Haley, and lost a second; he would have lost as much if he had slid out on the opposite side to round the hood. The low-flowing plane was spraying the highway with bullets. They chewed the paving, they screeched and whistled as they ricocheted. Lagging natives doubled up, sprawling across their weapons and their bundles. This was reprisal for some bit of guerrilla warfare, or perhaps it was just a lesson administered on general principles.

Kane got one backward glance as he lurched from the running-board, to follow the flash of hosiery which marked Diane's dive for cover. Then he saw that the car was rolling backward, very slowly, yet certainly bound for the ditch. He pivoted. Diane screamed from cover, "Let it go, let it go!"

The plane was swooping up. As he lunged for the cowling, Kane caught a glimpse of the red-rayed sun on its wing tips. He snatched the parking-brake lever, and knew that in another split second his hand would have been shaking enough to make him fumble hopelessly. But he checked the car. And then his respite ended. The plane nosed down, sharply, as if the gunner had picked an individual instead of a general target.

The bursts raked the road for a dozen yards behind. Slugs chewed the fenders. Fragments of jacketed bullets stung and slashed Kane as he flung himself clear, and rolled into the ditch. He heard the whack and thump and clang of metal under the deadly impacts.

Then it was over. As he clambered to his knees, he wondered how he could have caged all that long-drawn-out train of sensation in a split second. Then Diane scrambled from cover, shredding her blouse and skirt, and shedding a shoe.

She landed beside him before he could gain his feet. "Oh, you idiot, what's a car, why did you do it—"

Shakily, he caught her by the arms, and clinging to each other, they rose, standing ankle deep in the slimy ditch-water.

Haley slid down the embankment and growled at Kane disgustedly, "Why, you —— ——— fool!"

Diane straightened up, cried out, and clambered to the shoulder of the road. "My birth certificate!"

She found her handbag on the floor-boards, and undamaged. Kane crouched at the rear end, sniffed the air, and announced, "Gas tank isn't punctured. But it ought to be. Look at that rear panel, look at the upholstery, look at that hood."

"While you're at it," Haley said, grimly, "look at those tires."

Those in the rear were chewed to pieces, including the spare. Bullets drilling the fenders had flattened one front. The radiator cap lay a dozen yards in front; the shell was riddled, though high up, so that little water leaked.

Now that the gunnery was over for the moment, the natives came out of the jungle.

Grim little men armed with coconut hooks fixed to long poles gathered about. One said in broken English, "You give us ride to Malasila." His manner indicated that he had a cutting engagement in that village. Kane asked, "The army there?"

"No. Mount Apo there. Good place, near Davao."

"Give him—oh, give them all a lift," Diane urged. "That hooked blade would look wonderful under a Jap chin!"

Something like twelve wiry men, averaging five feet three, wedged themselves into the open car, and on the running-boards, and on the trunk rack. If they had any women or children among those left behind, they gave no sign. They had a rendezvous behind the sacred mountain.

And as Kane drove on, with his elbows wedged into his ribs by the press of militant hitch hikers, he wondered if the unexplored country behind Apo might not be the best destination for all.

"Keep a lookout to the rear," he called, and Haley translated for the men on the trunk rack.

CHAPTER III

HALEY HAS A HUNCH

THE bullet-riddled Packard clumped along on three rims; the leaking radiator, and the sketchy timing of the valves made the motor run hot. And worst of all, two shattered spark plugs further reduced the power. Jolting and clanking, she labored up the grades. The passengers piled out from time to time to get water from the roadside. They tore strips from their *camisas* to plug the bullet holes in the radiator, but that helped only a little.

Yet it was better than walking, or so Kane thought, until one of the rear guard yelled, and Haley relayed, "Tanks following us, they've broken through."

Whether the pilot who had machine-gunned the road had gone back to report that there were refugees important enough to drive a large car, or whether apparent pursuit was actually part of a routine plan to terrorize the district, Kane could not guess, nor did he have to. Regardless of reasons, the enemy was wallowing and rumbling along, overhauling the crippled car.

For a moment, Kane could see the leader of the column. The turret guns chattered. Then the blind spot beyond a crest sheltered the fugitives. Meanwhile, the interval was closing.

There remained at least ten gallons of gas, but the chances of utilizing it had become slim. The clank and clatter and rumble of the tanks was all too loud, and momentarily gaining in volume.

"Lucky," Haley said, "we've got native guides to the unexplored territory."

"What we need is a head start," Kane grumbled. "If we'd not spent a night pretending we were sleeping!"

Then he saw the bridge ahead, and the deep ravine it spanned. Beyond, the road swooped up sharply, snaking along a ledge. Here they would lose ground, fatally. It was time to abandon the car.

"And a chance," Kane explained, "of blocking the skibbies, wherever they're bound for."

"Not dynamiting the bridge?" Diane mocked. "I left mine at home."

"You run ahead and keep out of sight. The both of you. One of these lads knows enough English to catch on."

"What's the idea?"

"Get out, take cover, and watch." He tried to herd Diane and her father over the crest, but they halted a dozen yards beyond the car, and then turned back.

The Filipinos clambered up the steep slope and cut flexible lianas. These they shaped into loops which were drawn snugly about the rocks with which Kane chocked the front wheels. Then, releasing the parking-brake, he took off the useless spare, and knelt beside the road, fumbling with tire irons.

"Get out of sight," he yelled, "they're coming over the crest."

In a moment, he was alone with the crippled phaeton, and as far as the crew of the Jap tank could see, desperately struggling to repair a tire. Whether they did or did not pay any attention to the total lack of passengers around what had been an overloaded vehicle was irrelevant; to men behind armor, it made no difference where a dozen natives lurked with choppers and bolos.

The Packard hogged the center of the road, Kane looked back at the approaching tank. It was slowing down; a car was valuable salvage, to be left, if possible, for the detachments which handled goods seized from civilians. If he could, the driver of the lead tank would creep past, rather than halt to move the obstacle.

"Ready?" Kane asked the Filipinos who lurked under cover.

"*Si, señor.* But do not wait too much."

The lianas looped about the rocks which held the phaeton from rolling downhill could scarcely be visible to the sharpest eye in the approaching tank. The playful gunner squeezed a short burst, and bullets kicked up bits of paving. Kane, bounding for cover, had ceased playing. But for his proximity to the rear of the machine, he would certainly have been riddled. The Jap gunner, however, wished to leave the prize undamaged.

"Heave!"

The men pulled on the wiry lines. Kane struck a match, touched it to the fuel soaked cloth which led to the gas tank. He had slashed the metal, just above the level of the remaining liquid. And as she rolled clear, flame roared up from the rear end.

For once, that stiff steering wheel justified itself. She wavered only a little from a straight course, and coasting free, the phaeton swooped toward the narrow bridge, picking up speed faster than the tank could alter its course, or reverse. They met, blazing rear end smashing into the left front. Two tons of fast moving metal pinched the gas tank flat, sending up a dozen or more gallons of the flaming fuel to splash through louvres and gun ports.

The smoking tangle smashed against the railing, cracked the reinforced concrete, and then stalled.

THOUGH the crew had side arms, the only fight they had a mind for was directed toward each other in their effort to get from the blazing interior. Kane steadied his rifle across a rock. It was like shooting fish in a barrel, until the

Filipinos blocked his line of sight. With bolos, and long handled halobos they closed in on the half-roasted enemy. And before the heat of the now burning tank drove them away, they had salvaged

The Filipinos closed in on the enemy with bolos.

several of the Japs' pistols and belts.

But the rest of the armored advance party, warned by the column of oily black smoke, came pelting over the crest at full speed. In spite of fume and fire, the opening machine-gun burst was dangerously close. Kane's first urge was to head downgrade. He yelled to Diane and her father, and gestured to that effect. The Filipinos, however, swung in the opposite direction.

There was a momentary lull in the screech and whack of slugs, since the leading armored units were now masked by the wreck at the bridge. One turret gun raked the upslope, as Kane followed Diane through the *bejuco* which festooned the trees, but the thorns did more damage than the overhead fire.

Presently, they reached a zigzagging game trail, and could walk instead of crawl. The natives explained, "Better on top, looking down."

There was no pursuit. And when, after an hour of climbing, they reached the ridge, they could catch glimpses of

the road, and the armored column which crawled on, clearing the way for truck loads of soldiers. The Japs were heading inland, toward the Liguasan Marshes and the Magindanao Moro country. Almost due north, Apo's white cone rose above the adjoining peaks. Between Apo, and the Sayre Highway, reaching into the Bukidnon country and finally to the sea, were a thousand square kilometers of unknown country; unknown, and practically uninhabited, for most of the island's sparse population was confined to the coast.

"Like a desert island," Kane gasped, still trying to get his breath. "But a long way from Zambo. . . . Hey, what's wrong?"

Diane's face froze. She clawed the handbag, the tattered, mud splashed bag she had hugged in the crook of her arm during that cruel climb. "That certificate—"

"Take it easy," her father cut in. "Piece by piece."

Her mirror was missing, and also the cap of her lipstick. Somewhere between the unloading of the car and the arrival at the crest, she had lost things from her bag. And one of those things, she learned presently, was the paper for which she had come to Davao.

"We'll be camping soon," Kane said. "And the Japs have cleared that point. I can back track. There's just a wild chance that you lost it alongside the road."

She caught his arm. "As if it makes any difference who I am! Or what I can prove!"

Then she laughed, a laugh which made Kane grit his teeth, and shiver a little. Thinking back over the past two days, he wondered at his own calmness. Though he had his papers, he doubted his own identity.

But Diane surprised him by regaining control. "Dad, I'm an awful fool, aren't I? Suppose they do intern me as an alien."

Haley forced a smile. His eyes had lost their crackle, and beneath his grime, his ruddy face had become bleak and gray. He half turned, and shrugged, saying, "Tough climb." Then, after cocking his head, listening for a moment: "This leads to a spring, hear it?"

The Filipinos nodded. *Un poco mas arriba, señor,*" one said in labored Spanish. "You wait, we make camp." He caught Kane's eye, and when they were a few paces from the group, he muttered, "The old one, he is hurt but he says nothing."

"You mean, hit, back there?"

"I think so. When the tank guns fired. I was by him."

"My bright idea," Kane said to himself. "But what the hell else could I do?"

HALEY'S wound was high in the chest, a clean puncture, with so little external bleeding that it had barely marked his sweat stained shirt. He looked up, grinned at Kane, and demanded, "What'd you expect me to do, holler for first aid before we made camp? Go ahead and call an ambulance now."

One of the Filipinos cooked up a mess of herbs in a small brass bowl which was part of his field kit. Lacking better surgical aids, Kane let the man apply jungle treatment to the wound.

Tight lipped, Diane assisted with the improvised triangular bandage which secured the poultice, and held Haley's arm across his chest, so as to ease the tension on the wounded side.

"Now stretch out. You mustn't try to sit up."

Haley shook his head. "Leaning against this stump is just as good. I don't feel so choked."

That disturbed Kane; the choking sensation meant that the old planter had bled internally, and severely. "I don't know this country at all," he said, "except Davao, and the trail to the survey. We've got to get you to some plantation, some town with a doctor. Is there any place this side of Cotabato?"

"Have you ever met anyone who knows anything about the interior?"

"There's that agricultural project," Diane said. "They have a hospital, somewhere in the Koronadal Valley. There are schools, stores for the settlers. If we could only get to Koronadal!"

Kane visualized the map. "If we'd kept straight on, instead of swinging in-

land," he said after a moment, "we'd have reached the end of the coast highway, and come to the proposed road from Bolton—imagine a village with that name, in Mindanao!—forty miles of *proposed* road! And you saw what was ahead of us when the Japs caught up. That was what they call a second-class highway.

"The one to Koronadal," he went on, somberly, "is probably nothing more than an occasional blazed tree along a route skirting the unexplored territory between here and Mount Matutum."

"Look here," Haley cut in. "Just because we tangled with some motorized Japs at Kilometer 147 doesn't mean that they're going to occupy the entire stretch. We don't know what's going on, what the army is doing, except trying to keep them bottled up as near Davao as possible. We can get back on the highway, watch our step, detour when and if some of them overtake us, or we run into their lines. And it's only fifty miles of dirt road to Fort Pikit."

"Rain," Diane pointed out, "makes that second-class stretch about impossible for their trucks, but we can paddle through the mud. I think Dad's right."

Kane shook his head. "Dodging Jap patrols will be tough. We'll be in the jungle most of the time anyway, so it makes no difference whether we head through the unexplored territory to Koronadal, or try for Fort Pikit."

The pagan tribesmen squatted by the fire, patiently waiting for their rice to cook. That, and some dried fish completed the ration. And unsavory as the mess was, it had to take the place of the supplies lost in the scramble to get off the road.

They offered the pot to the Americans. All dipped into it and ate. Then one of the tribesmen said, "We go to put out guards, they may try to surprise us, we are too close to the road."

Kane could scarcely believe that it was possible for men to disappear almost as he eyed them. They seemed to fade during momentary shifts in his attention.

"My head's going in circles," Diane said, wearily, when the jungle had swallowed up the last pagan. "Let's not try to decide everything tonight. Save that for morning, and then we'll make a litter."

"Who's going to carry it?" Haley demanded. "You and Jim?"

"Oh, we can get four natives. Remember how they carried us up that trail, the year after Mother died?"

Haley nodded. "Uh-huh. That's right. Now you try to get some sleep."

KANE chopped ferns to make Diane a bed, and then he fed the smudge, blanketing the tiny clearing until it was almost free of pests. When that was done, he set about making a bunk for Haley, but the planter stopped him.

"Can't stretch out. Fix something for yourself, but skip me. When you're through, I want to talk to you." His glance shifted toward the girl huddled close to the smudge. "I think she's asleep already."

That afterthought, which carried the whole point of Haley's remark, made Kane hitch about and come closer. "What's the bad news?"

"Don't be so jumpy." Haley's lightness was almost convincing. "She's all in, she has to have some rest."

In silence, they watched Diane's restless stirring. To say that she slept was not quite true; hers was rather the unconsciousness of total exhaustion. Kane himself was burned out. His entire body ached and itched from bites, from the scratches of *julat anay*, the slash of cogon grass. He wondered how Haley could be so much at ease.

Moments later, Haley began, little above a whisper, "I wanted to get her out of here before the show started, and I missed. Can I depend on you?"

Kane countered, uneasily, "What am I good for, in all this mess?"

"You hate these islands so much you're bound to find a way out, sooner or later. Give her a lift."

"How? I mean, in any way other than I'd be doing for myself, or that you couldn't do."

"I wasn't on the way out," Haley answered. "I'd hoped to get her on the clipper and home. While I stayed on the plantation. War or no war, I belong

here. What'd I do in the States, after thirty years in Zamboanga?"

Kane flared up, "You've no business left to protect! Where can you ship your copra?"

"This is my home. My wife's buried here. I've spent more than half my life here."

"Then it's high time to move! I haven't the foggiest idea how I'm going to do it, but I'm getting to a white man's country, and to hell with these islands. They're nothing at all in the whole big show. Europe is the point to hit. How can I give her any special help, I mean, other than—look here, I don't follow you."

Haley smiled wearily. "I'll go into that later. But here's why *I* can't leave. My number's up. And soon."

"Take it easy, take it easy! We'll get porters to carry you to a doctor. In a pinch, we can stay right here till you can march. If there's no infection, you'll be O.K. in no time."

"That's right enough," Haley admitted. "You're full of logic, and it's good. Don't think gunshot wounds are any more novelty to me than bolo cuts. I've doctored plenty of both. It's just a hunch I have. The kind the natives have, or soldiers in action."

"Cut it out. You're too tough to be knocked out by that slug. It didn't get you right."

Haley patiently repeated, "I have a hunch, and I am not referring to this lousy little puncture."

Kane, in spite of himself, was being impressed by the old man's premonition. He felt that his own escape was slowly but surely being cut off; that he would be hampered by a woman, and in a way which, while he could not yet define it, would be serious. He did not fear the responsibility of helping Diane to the coast, any more than he shrank from the present task of getting her father to a doctor. He sensed that what Haley had in mind was more than the assistance which any white man would extend to any other white person.

"Just what am I to do?"

"I'll tell you later. Put that gourd of water handy, and get yourself some sleep."

CHAPTER IV

THE BISHOP OF MINDANAO

KANE, stretched out on his heap of leaves, was sure that he had not slept, yet there was no denying that the sudden sharpening of his consciousness was a definite awakening. Somewhere, a man was singing; and the voice made Kane shake his head, and tell himself that he must still be asleep.

The voice reminded him of Paul Robeson's minus the polish: rich, African, shaking and thrilling him like the sound of trumpets and war drums, and utterly impossible in Mindanao.

"*Old man river . . . old man river . . . he jest goes rolling along. . . .*"

The singer challenged the jungle. He had breath to spare, fire and life to spare, and so much that he could make the weary and the wounded and the frightened glad that they were alive.

In a breathing pause, Kane said to himself, "I am nuts, it's fever, there never was a man like that in Mindanao."

But the voice rolled and surged, reaching into everything, though Haley still sat there, chin drooping to his chest. Diane stirred restlessly. Nearer and nearer the singer came. There were faint cracklings in the jungle. This told Kane how far away the unseen man must have been when he first raised his voice. And who would risk singing in a quarter swarming with Japs?

Then the man hove into view, booting his pony into the tiny clearing and the murky red of the smudge: the biggest Negro Kane had ever seen.

"Good-evening, white folks," he greeted. "I done heard about you."

The big black man wore a slouch hat, blue flannel shirt, and khaki breeches. His dismounting was simple: a matter of taking his feet from the stirrups, boosting himself backward over the cantle of his McClellan saddle, and at the same time thrusting his undersized steed forward with a vigorous shove on the rump. For all his great height and breadth and bulk, he made the unorthodox move with the ease and grace and agility of a cat.

I am Bishop Jackson of the Mindanao Evangelical Church of the Pagan Tribes.

There was no guessing his age. The lines in that purplish brown face told nothing. His powerful hands were unwrinkled. All that gave Kane a hint was the kinky gray hair.

"I am Bishop Jackson, sir, of the Mindanao Evangelical Church of the Pagan Tribes." Then, as Diane sat up, wide eyed and exclaiming in astonishment, he lifted his hat and bowed. "Good-evening, ma'am. I heard you all were having difficulties."

"*Bishop Jackson*. . . Oh. . . I've heard of you."

Haley's head jerked up from his chest. "Oh, hello. So you're the bishop."

The Negro sensed their incredulity, and patted the nearer of the fat saddle bags.

"I wear my robes," he told them, "only when officiating."

"I thought I was dreaming," Diane said, "when I heard you sing."

"That was to keep members of my flock from spearing me by mistake. They're always a bit fidgety and specially now."

Kane said, "So that's how you passed our guards?"

The bishop's expression changed. "I met them an hour or so ago, back thataway."

His gesture indicated the general line of march toward Mount Apo.

Kane leaped to his feet. "All right, Haley! Now ask me why I hate these damned islands! Maybe I shouldn't blame them for walking out, but sneaking off!"

No one broke into his tirade. He cursed the islands, their inhabitants, and thanked God that the country was not his. Then, pausing for breath and a fresh start, he realized that he had been talking to himself.

The bishop was taking a first-aid kit out of the further saddle bag, and Diane was kneeling beside her father. The old planter said, "Don't feel so bad about those pagans. They left their families so they could travel faster. They have a pressing engagement with the Japs. Since they can't be hampered by their own women and children, they can't be delayed by us, can they?"

Kane felt that he had been put in the wrong and he was too weary to be graceful about it. "But that sneaking off, *that's* what was lowdown!"

The bishop, coming forward with his kit, had a soft and gentle answer. "They's jest too polite. They couldn't help, and they had some patriotic killing to tend to, so they sort of quietly snuck out, not wanting to hurt yo' feelings." He chuckled. "Yes, sir, they good people when you understand them. In forty years, they ain't taken my head, and hardly ever tried to."

AT dawn, the bishop offered his plan. "They's trails to Koronadal that ain't bad, and the yellow brethern ain't heard of them. Somewhat out of my diocese, but folks know me."

The bishop lifted Haley to the saddle. Then, with a few bolo strokes, he cut rattan and bamboo, and lashed the pieces to the saddle so as to shape something like a chair-back.

"Jest lean agin that and make yourself comfortable. Ma'am, you all grab

the latigo strap and let Daniel-Come-To-Judgment pull you along. It helps a lot and keeps you feet from playing out."

"Daniel-Come-To-Judgment?"

"Yas'm. That's my hoss. Third one of that name."

So they set out, the bishop leading. Bolo in hand, he slashed trailing vines whose thorns would have raked those who followed him. Kane, rifle cradled in his arm, brought up the rear.

"Ain't no danger," the bishop assured them. "When I smell trouble, I'll signal with my hand and you all stand still."

They worked their way along the ridge for a while, and then swung back toward the highway, reaching it at a point somewhere beyond the end of the paved stretch. Truck and tractor treads marked the mud; but there was no sign of lurking friend or enemy. After some moments of sniffing the air, literally smelling the locale for traces of trouble, the bishop announced, "Here's where we all cross into what they calls unexplorated territory. You there, Dan'l-Come-To-Judgment, step easy."

"What do you call him when you're in a hurry?" Kane asked, once the road was behind him.

"Ain't never in a hurry. White folks aims to spread the gospel too fast, and that makes the pagans suspicious and hostile. And them that don't want religion, I don't give 'em none. That's why they seldom try to take my head."

The bishop, Kane decided, had a good formula. And the shaggy horse took his time, picking each step, trying the footing on each rocky shelf. Overhead, monkeys wrangled, and parrots chattered. Deeper and deeper, the uncertain trail bored into the jungle, wound into green shadows, tunnelled into orchid clustered depths.

In places, the daily rain fell directly through, but often it had to trickle its way down to the path. Within an hour, Kane was hopelessly lost. And they could not have covered more than a mile, for the bishop cut and slashed to gain the clearance needed for Haley and his bamboo back rest.

But what kept Kane tense was watching Diane's heels twist in the treacherous footing.

That afternoon, when all the accumulated strain and weariness put the fugitives into a glassy-eyed stupor, the bishop began to sing. They borrowed enough of his exuberance to carry them to camp.

Haley said, when they helped him from the saddle, "The going wasn't a bit bad. I feel fine."

But fever was setting in, and Koronadal was a long way off. Kane, remembering the old man's forebodings, wondered if the bishop and Daniel could cover the ground in time.

He helped the bishop cut bamboo stakes and sharpen them to make a barricade about the camp. In the course of this work, he had a chance to ask, "What's the idea? I thought you said we were safe against surprise?"

"The Lawd helps him who helps his self." Then, when the last pointed bamboo had been lashed into place, leaving only one small gap, the bishop said, "Broth is good for invalids. If you let me take yo' rifle, there'll be fresh meat."

Whatever sound he made once he left the inclosure was too faint to be heard above the gurgle of the nearby stream. Diane glanced up at the slanting red rays which reached through *lauan* and *akle* branches and said, "There's enough daylight for a bath and a leech hunt."

SHE had scarcely left when Haley beckoned to Kane. "Fever hasn't set in enough yet to make me goofy, but it won't be long now."

"Don't worry about that, we'll tie you on your horse if it's necessary. And I'm betting we'll get to Koronadal in a couple more days."

"I'm not worried about *this*." Haley tapped his chest. "It's something else. It's about her getting to the States. A complicated mess in wartime. Going through Dutch and British territory, hip deep in red tape. Nobody trusts anyone, rules are rules, and Lord knows what'll happen or where she'll be stuck, and for the duration. And if the Japs aren't whipped right away, they'll spread, making things worse for strangers."

Kane raised his voice a little when he heard Diane splashing about in the

stream. "I'd like to tell you it'll all work out, but who's going to take my say-so about her?"

"That's just it. I've got to tell you before fever makes me go out of my head. Or before that hunch works out."

Being made a party to the old man's forebodings was just a bit too much for Kane's patience. "You're coming out of this. What's on your mind?"

"I want you to marry Diane."

"*What?* Say—"

"Take it easy, son. I am not yet feverish. Won't hurt you a bit, and it'll help her a lot."

"I guess she's been wild about me ever since that first look!"

"Nothing of the kind, though she could do a lot worse, and if I do say it myself, so could you. But that's not the point. Your identity is established, and you could get through. And so could your wife. Don't look so horrified—you risked your damned head fixing our car, when you were doing all right on foot and could have trailed along with the army."

But the fact remained that Kane was shocked, and that he showed it; he knew that he did. So he blurted, "You don't get it at all. Confidentially, I think she's pretty swell, but there's a war, and I've got a job to do as soon as I can get home."

Haley eyed him, shrewdly, and chuckled. "Trouble with you is you're scared at the idea of having a woman hung on your neck, aren't you? Or you wouldn't be one of those cowardly bachelors, not at your age?"

Kane reddened over and beyond the effect of sun and insect bites. He choked. "How old do you think I am?"

"Close to thirty. I'm right, huh?"

"About my age? Yes."

"I mean about being a damn coward. Sure, sure, you poked yourself out for bait to get a crew of Japs, but one gal weighing about a hundred and fifteen on the hoof has you scared silly. I hope you don't think you'd have any trouble getting rid of her the day you reach Frisco?"

"No, not a girl like her."

"All right, you're just scared on general principles. Don't tell me you aren't, I know better. I use to feel that way about it myself. Sort of an instinct, only it's plain fool skittishness."

Since Kane could neither explain or justify his qualms, he counterattacked, "I guess you two have got it all fixed up, making a human passport out of me."

"Haven't mentioned it to her. When the time comes, you tell her. *She* won't be jittery. Women have more sense that way."

But he could read the panic and rebellion and protest in Kane, who had now chalked up another point against Mindanao, and in favor of giving it back to the natives.

"Don't be so squeamish, Jim," he wheedled. "It isn't as if you had a girl back home."

"How do you know I haven't?"

"You'd've mentioned her before now. Oh, well, suit yourself." The far off whack of a rifle came almost as a period. "The bishop hasn't lost much time."

Then Diane returned from the pool. "Bedraggled," she said, "but not quite so grimy."

She sat down and got to work with her lipstick and eyebrow pencil, while Kane built a fire.

He pictured himself beating his way from Zamboanga to Basilan in a native boat, and from Basilan to Jolo, from island to island until he reached Sandakan, or Tawi Tawi, and then Celebes. Nor would Diane be a serious handicap; she had already proved herself a solid person, and fully equal to the nasty going one would meet in a Moro *vinta*. Haley's suggestion was reasonable. The mere technicality of marrying the girl would certainly expedite her way through official red tape in a war-crazy Orient. Finally, he had to admit, her presence would probably help him, as couples would surely get preference when limited transportation was doled out to civilians.

But in spite of logic, the idea terrified him. He was a free man and he had a war to fight, and to hell with this business of having a girl, even a charming and capable one, flung at him. In uttermost emergency, he'd not back down—meanwhile, there was still hope.

The small fire had become a bed of glowing coals when the bishop returned, carrying a small deer. "The Lawd fed the Children of Israel, and the Lawd feeds us."

This encouraged Kane. Divine intervention might extricate him from the plans of a planter who had rather prematurely decided to die.

CHAPTER V

GENERAL DATU RYAN

FAR ahead, Kane caught occasional glimpses of Mount Matutum, though usually the jungle blocked out all but small patches of sky. Matutum, Mindanao's second highest peak, was the goal, and a hopeless one. For Haley's wound had become infected, and the old planter's high fever kept him muttering and mumbling, chattering wildly about old days in Zamboanga.

"Can't take him much further," Kane said to the bishop.

"The Lawd pervides. If you can't get him to a doctor, you can get a doctor to him. It's that simple."

Kane's boots were standing the punishment, but Diane's shoes were gone. Feet bound in raw buckskin, she staggered along, hanging to the latigo strap. Watching this was as bad as listening to the bishop's optimism. The man must have been crazy, having after his discharge from the army in 1899, refused transportation home, in order to preach to the pagans, and found a one-man church, with himself as bishop.

"Couldn't exactly call myself a pope, right off," the black man explained. "Not till I got a few more revelations."

"Well, you've learned plenty in the past forty years to rank a promotion."

The bishop nodded. "But it's thissaway. Up in Samar, and all over, they had murdering outlaws that called they selves popes. It got so a Gawd-fearing colored man couldn't call hisself that, or the pagans'd think he was fixing to organize a war. And now it's jest too late, so I stays a bishop."

Then the black face brightened. "But the gove'ment done made me a judge, account I converted some tough customers. It's really my judge and notary pay what keeps up the church. The only free-will offerings I get is vittles."

Kane dug up a sweaty ten *peso* bill and handed it to him.

The bishop rolled his eyes. "Lawd be praised! A cash thank offering. Gawd bless you, sir. And we ain't perishing in the wilderness, none of us."

He made an impressive gesture. He thumped Daniel-Come-To-Judgment on the rump, and marched on, singing.

The latigo strap, old and worn, tore across. Diane, thrown off balance, tumbled in a heap. When Kane bounded forward to help her, she jerked her arm free. "Let me alone! I can manage."

There was more than weariness behind her outburst. Kane, himself at the cracking point, tried to be patient. "I know it's my fault. Your father was hurt. We needn't have hit back at those Japs. And he could have risked staying on the road. But there's no use reminding me I showed lousy judgment."

"Oh, shut up!"

She tore away, and stumbled along to catch up with the horse, so that she could get a lift from the rattan-and-bamboo cage which supported her father.

Bit by bit the truth came to Kane: Haley, feverish and muttering, must have said enough for Diane to guess how her father had proposed to insure her return to the States. And that made Kane wish he were buried in the most unexplored corner of this unexplored region.

She slipped on a rock, and lost her hold. The fall left her breathless, and too exhausted to rise. When Kane picked her up, she gasped, "I can take care of myself! I'd rather spend the rest of my life in the jungle than marry you!"

"That's mutual" he flared, as he fairly carried her along. "You little fool, you ought to know better than to pay attention to what he's saying. His fever's burning him up."

If the bishop heard, he gave no sign. It was not until half an hour later that he halted, turned about, and announced, "The promised land is waiting. Vittles and rest and a place for the old gentleman."

A STREAM, broad and deep, skirted the edge of the jungle. The further bank was cleared. Women worked in a rice field. Well back from the river was a large house with carved eaves, a thatched roof, and walls of woven rattan.

At a bamboo pier, a barge was moored. A Moro, wearing an admiral's cocked hat and a gee-string, came to the prow. He raised what seemed to be binoculars.

Kane brushed the sweat from his eyes, and squinted. The binoculars were beer bottles taped together. The officer bawled in a salty voice, "Break out the ensign! Lively, you lubbers!"

The crew, naked except for gee-strings and yachting caps, answered, "Aye, aye, sir!"

A yellow flag rose to the mast. One of the crew bounded ashore. And then Kane saw other figures in what he now took for a phase of delirium. A Moro, wearing gee-string and an old-fashioned policeman's helmet, leaned against a cast-iron lamp post and twirled a night stick. A star was painted in white on his bare chest.

Hearing the shouts from the barge, he straightened up, and stalked into the center of the dirt road which led from the pier to the house with the patterned rattan walls. At his station, he blew a whistle, he began to gesture, and he bawled in English, "You there, where the hell you think you're going? Can't you see that light?"

A string of signal flags rose to the masthead. Presently, an answering signal fluttered from the pole which reached from the eaves of the house. Diane forgot her weariness and her wrath, and leaned against Kane. "Are they really speaking English—or am I—"

"We are both nuts. Look here, your father bawled things up."

"I still wouldn't marry a man who's afraid of women," she said, but smilingly.

Sailors in gee-strings manned the sweeps. Slowly, the barge swung into the current. She had barely reached the bank when two "side boys" turned out to pipe the visitors over the side. This ritual alarmed Daniel-Come-To-Judgment, but the bishop managed to thump and push him to the barge.

Kane tried and wasted some English on the skipper, whose vocabulary was restricted to nautical commands, and exhortations such as, "Man the pumps, you sons of ———s!" And the crew apparently was limited to "Aye, aye, sir."

Sometimes he shouted, "Hard-a-port!" The commands had no effect on navigation.

The barge had barely landed when, ignoring the traffic cop's directions, a white man in khaki rode down the drive. He wore a saber and pistol and Sam Browne belt, and burnished cordovan boots. On his shoulders gleamed four silver stars. His hat cord was gilt, as became a general. An aide, wearing a red turban, tight red pants, and a silver ferruled *barong*, followed on foot, carrying the ceremonial yellow parasol with yellow fringes: the token of Malay royalty.

Four brown girls completed the procession. They walked as if unaccustomed to their shoes. All were young and shapely, all gleamed with costume jewelry; and each had perched on her sleek black hair a gleaming tiara.

The horseman reined in. "I am General Datu Ryan," he announced. Then, indicating the girls in red calico, "And these are my wives. Welcome to the capital."

(To be concluded)

RECOGNITION SIGNAL

By
FRANK RICHARDSON PIERCE

Solid fire piled high above the battleship's tumbling bridge, then she seemed to fall apart and settle into the sea.

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES DYE

CAPTAIN JIM LANE stepped into Chief Boatswain George Carson's office—and left his rank behind him. They were life-long friends. The captain was a Naval Academy graduate; the warrant officer had come up from the ranks, and during World War I had been a lieutenant. Briefly Lane glanced at Carson's desk, though he knew every item on it. There was the letter basket containing files of recruiting problems sent to Carson; pen and pencil set; a volume on naval strategy, and the ever-present volume of Western adventure.

Carson, for relaxation, liked to go along with the sheriff, plot methods of capturing the villain, and after chasing him to hell and gone, marry the girl.

There were four photographs in silver frames: the boatswain's wife; his twin daughters; his only son, Bill, who had graduated from the academy with honors; Bill's wife and their two babies.

Captain Lane's throat muscles were tight with distress, but his voice was steady with willed calmness. He said, "Well . . . George," and stopped.

Then George Carson knew that Bill had been killed in action. His strong, bronzed fingers gripped the edge of the desk until the knuckles were white and hard against the skin. A long moment passed before he could ask, "Were there . . . details?"

"Fragmentary . . . from a merchant skipper named Bown," the captain answered. "He was following Bill's cruiser after a storm had scattered a Murmansk convoy. The lookouts saw or sensed something in the night and she was off. Bown saw only her spreading wake for several minutes, then her blinker light demanded a recognition signal. Bown said the answer was a sheet of flame. The cruiser answered with her forward guns just before she went down."

"It sounds like a broadside from a pocket battleship," Carson said, return-

ing to a professional basis for a moment. "She could bring to bear six eleven-inch guns, four five-point-nines, some of smaller caliber and perhaps torpedoes."

Carson didn't ask about survivors. A man thrown into water as cold as that, survived no longer than eight minutes. "Jim," he said, "this has happened before. "The British lost a heavy cruiser and a couple of destroyers. We lost a destroyer and now . . . a cruiser. The fellow has developed a technique. We must find a way of meeting it or pay an awful price. That's war!"

"He is a lone wolf and has the advantage because all contacts are prey," the captain said. "We must exchange signals or fire on our own people."

"And that, sir, is parallel to a Western sheriff allowing a dangerous killer to draw first," Carson said. He suddenly looked very old and tired. "I must tell Bill's mother and wife," he said. "Thank God his kids are too young to understand. When they're old enough, I hope they'll understand what we've done and hope to do was to give their generation a better world." He lit a cigarette and his fingers trembled slightly. "I wouldn't want them to think their father paid with his life for a blunder."

"Do you want me to go along with you, George?" the captain asked.

"They're Navy wives, Jim," Carson replied, "but it would be nice if Edna and you dropped in this evening."

The captain, childless, had followed Bill's career from birth with a father's sympathy and understanding, touched with pride. Only his self-discipline kept him from breaking. "We'll be over, George," he said.

He passed through the door, picking up his rank and responsibilities as it closed behind him.

"THE enemy strategy isn't new," Carson said several days later. "It's as old as conflict between men. You stalk your man and by appropriate means induce him to disclose his position. Then you strike before he can fix your position. It was done on the range repeatedly, the sheriff tricking the villain into revealing his position by firing at the spot where he thought the sheriff was crouching. Then the sheriff blazed away at the flash of the villain's gun."

"Then, you've worked out your *appropriate means?*"

"It is worth a try, sir."

The captain listened as he outlined the plan. "What you are asking, is to be sent to a destroyer of the *Warrington* class." He shook his head. "When war broke out we were both in retirement and it took a bit of doing to get back into active service. I was waivered on my overweight, vision and one or two other things. That heart of yours, George . . . bad. You might drop off any time. We're dealing with a serious business and the facts must be aired." He shook his head. "You were taken from the inactive list for recruiting purposes only. That was definitely understood."

"That is right, sir," Carson admitted, "but many a salesman has put over a big deal—once he got his foot inside the doorway. As for dropping off any time . . . Well?" He waited for Captain Lane to weaken and when there were no signs he continued quietly, "I've known practically every human emotion, but the supreme one, so . . . what am I waiting for?"

"But damn it, George . . ."

"You weigh results against probable cost, sir," the boatswain said, "then . . . act. I've asked for but one thing in a service that covers some forty years. I asked for Bill's appointment to Annapolis. Now I'm asking . . . *this.*"

THE destroyer was new and she carried guns in turrets and twelve twenty-one inch torpedo tubes. At first the younger officers were puzzled over the old boatswain's presence aboard, but the executive, who had played football with Bill on the Navy team, explained that his old man was tops. And they quickly learned he was just that.

After the second voyage they wondered what held him together. All hands took a beating from the sea and showed the strain. At the end of the fifth voyage they conspired to keep the boat-

swain under cover when the brass hats were around. They knew he would be ordered to shore duty and that would break his heart. He wanted to die in action, or not at all. But they knew, too, there was a limit to his endurance, even when supported by the fierce flame of resolve. They told themselves he would go ashore at the end of the sixth or seventh voyage on a stretcher. It seemed inevitable.

It was on the seventh voyage that a ruddy-cheeked sailor awakened him. The lookouts had sighted something as it crossed a star on the horizon's edge. It looked like something pretty big.

Carson's heart pounded dangerously with excitement. He could feel the pulsations in the pit of his stomach. There had been a storm, the convoy had scattered and this had been hunting weather to the wolf's liking.

There was a period of maneuvering after he reported, and the trap was set, with all hands at general quarters. Suddenly the blinker flashed—quick!—demanding! Then blackness—a blackness that was broken by golden flames stabbing the night as the pocket battleship's guns fired projectiles at the flash.

The torpedoes left the destroyer's tubes intricately patterned to bracket the water ahead, amidships and astern of the target. Again the night was momentarily black, then the battleship's outline was sketched in strokes of her own flame. There was sea and fire in a writhing mass, and as it settled, the second torpedo struck. The battleship staggered.

The destroyer rushed in and emptied her tubes once more. Solid fire piled high above the battleship's tumbling bridge, then she seemed to fall apart and settle into the sea.

The destroyer, rocking from the concussion, moved on.

There could be no survivors this far north. Long after the place was a dull glow on the horizon, the young officers on the bridge talked in sober voices, speculating if, in the brief moments before the torpedoes came, the enemy realized his mighty salvo had destroyed a blinker-equipped whaleboat, manned by an old boastwain a half mile astern.

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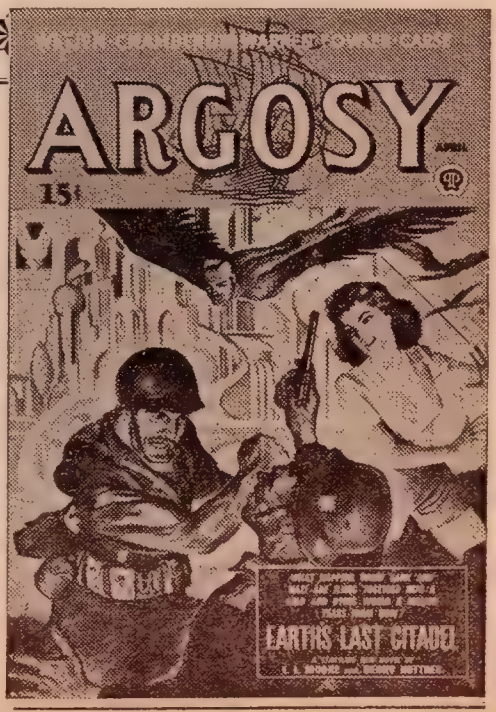


THE DESERTER

By
GEORGES SURDEZ

ILLUSTRATED
BY
HAMILTON GREENE

Someone threw a bottle at Larson, who dodged. He struck at the fellow, knocked him down and there was a general free-for-all.

TA-A-HACK!

Old Man Koppel looked up from his book. The sound had been muffled, remote, but he had heard too many shots to be mistaken. Someone had fired a gun, a large pistol, out there in the night. He reached out to adjust his lantern, did not rise from his chair. There was nothing to worry about. Policemen and military guards in the suburbs of Oran were apt to fire at shadows of late; an odd nervousness pervaded the city.

He glanced at the alarm-clock on the dresser, saw that he had twenty minutes before his next tour of inspection. He filled his pipe from a rumpled blue package, lighted it carefully. His big shoulders settled against the chair-back, he surveyed the one room of his shack; the neat bed, the pictures on the wall, the shelf of books, and a sense of deep comfort stole over him.

"A revolver, not a rifle," he murmured nevertheless.

He was not worried. He had a gun, his old service revolver, 1892 model, thirty-eight caliber, and he could shoot. Local prowlers knew it, knew him, and avoided the warehouse and storage yards he guarded. And silence had settled down again, save for the yapping of jackals in the nearby hills. With the large city of Oran less than two kilometers away, the beasts still came roaming in the Ras-el-Ain ravine on certain nights.

People claimed that lions had been about, long ago; they even called one of the lofty points Lion Mountain. But that must have been more than a hundred years ago. Atlas lions, he had read

somewhere, could no longer be found except in zoos and menageries. They had been extinct even when he had first come to North Africa.

"Must be forty years ago," he mused.

In point of fact it was more than forty-five. He, Jean Koppel, had been a big, blond, handsome Alsatian lad, come to the French Foreign Legion to escape serving the "Prussians." He had worn the blue greatcoat and red trousers of the old army; most of his comrades had sported the medals of the Tonkin, Dahomey and Madagascar Campaigns. And the veterans one met then, about the age he had attained now, had tall yarns to spin of the Crimea, Italy and Mexico.

He had grown old, and was a night-watchman, with nothing to show for thirty-six years of military service, five wounds, typhoid, yellow and malarial fevers; nothing save disks of tarnished metal hung from faded ribbons.

HIS face was pink and firm under the brush of short white hair, his eyes very blue, candid and calm as those of a small child. He was happy to be what he was, after being what he had been. Yes, he had been a victor, a conqueror. Bearing the old-fashioned knapsack, toting the Lebel rifle, he had trundled over continents, crossed seas and oceans, taking the French flag onward everywhere, to the border of giant China, in Africa, at the Dardenelles, in France. He smiled, then winced. The Japanese had Indo-China, the British held Madagascar, the Prussians held France. All his work had been for nothing, he had bled and suffered in vain, his comrades had died to no purpose.

"Bah," he muttered. "We'll get them all back. It isn't over yet. Sure, we got licked, licked worse than in 1870. Alsace is under the Prussians, just as it was when I left. We got it back once. The British and the Americans will win, and they'll understand that sometimes a country can't helped being licked any more than a man can help being wounded. And some Frenchmen are still fighting. The Legion's still in it!

That was his pride. Everywhere the Legion had been given a job to do, it had done it or died. He thought of the recent epic, the superb resistance of the Legionnaires at Bir Hasheim, in Libya. On Cameron Day, their commander had sent a greeting to the Old Legion at Sidi-bel-Abbes, to all his less fortunate comrades trapped on the other side of the wall. The broken Legion would unite again and fight on for France. Not the France of Vichy, which was a passing nightmare, but the real France, the France that men died for.

"I'm old," he murmured, "too old."

Yes, he was over sixty, active and strong, clear of eye and mind, but too old for their cursed war of machines and aviation. Give him a water bottle, a rifle and a hundred rounds, a place to lie and wait, and he could do damage. But *they* don't bring a war to you, you have to go find it.

Ta-ah-ack! Ta-hack!

Two shots this time, and much nearer, somewhere in the vacant lots, in the direction of the airport.

He slid the revolver from its holster, verified that the chambers were loaded. He turned the flame of the lantern down a bit, opened the door and stepped into the yard. The night was dark, the stars seemed very near. Two more shots slapped out, in rapid succession, and he heard the sound of running feet in the street beyond the enclosing wall, the voice of Ahmed, the street watchman, raised in shrill inquiry: "*Ben quoi, alors?*"

"He's gone your way—" another man shouted.

Koppel heard a light thud, at the angle of the wall, beyond the first shed. He knew he should call for help, keep clear, but he refused to concede weakness. A man with a gun was as good as another. Perhaps he had a vision of himself turning in a captive. He was old and he was vain. He strode swiftly forward, hunched, revolver held poised and ready.

"Halt, whoever you are—halt or I fire!"

"Is he in there?" a voice asked.

"I think so—" Koppel rounded the corner of the shed, and something collided with him, something big and hard,

panting and active. The gun was knocked from his hand. His big fingers closed on a shoulder, his fist struck out at random. He felt no fear, no worry of the outcome—he stood a good six feet and weighed two hundred.

Two hands groped for his neck, he brought down his chin snug to his breast. This lad was strong, young, probably, but Koppel felt that he was holding his own. Not for long, though, he knew. Then, without transition, he was picking himself up. He was alone in the darkness, with the taste of blood on his tongue.

"That was a smack he handed me," he thought. His groping fingers found the gun, closed on the butt. Anyway, he had saved that!

A light flashed in his direction.

"Ah, Koppel, it's you? Where did he get to?"

"I don't know. He handed me a pip of a whack, though."

There were several men about. Ahmed the night guard, with his big turban, two men in gendarmes' uniform and a big, impressive silhouette topped with a derby—Inspector Bourget. All of them must have climbed over the wall, as the gates were locked.

BOURGET moved to the center of the yard, flashed his light about. "Come out with your hands up! We give you thirty seconds, after that we shoot at sight."

The thirty seconds passed and no one appeared.

"We'll search," Bourget announced. He held the light under his arm, while he reloaded four chambers of the cylinder. They followed him as he tested doors, examined windows. "He won't get far if he leaves here, we've got guys outside. Can sprint like a rabbit, that lad!"

"Who is he, what's he wanted for?"

"I don't know. He was skulking in the freight depot at the Saharan station, and a guard hailed him. He ran. He got over the fence like a bird. I was in the café across the way, I spotted him, and called him. Tall guy. He stopped, so I didn't draw my gun. When I got near him, and started to talk, he smacked me on the jaw, and I saw thirty-six candles. And he was gone. I traced him to the airport, across the field, almost got him twice. He has no gun, or anyway, he has not used one so far."

"Think he's a thief?" Koppel asked.

"Probably, if he gets the chance." Bourget spoke without turning his head. In the dimmer radiance thrown up by the beam, his face showed red and hard, pleating in small folds under the ears and near his eyes. "But he's probably a guy escaping from a prison gang south. They have a lot of foreign riffraff down around Beni-Abbes, working on the railroad. Spaniards and Poles, and everything."

"It's pretty tough for them," Koppel suggested.

"I know it's tough. But why do they get in there in the first place? Not for picking daisies out of season, eh? Well, we've looked around about everywhere, eh, Koppel? He must have got over the wall—we've got fellows between here and the Negro village who'll pick him up. Didn't hurt you, did he?"

"Cut my cheek inside a little."

"I've got a lump myself," Bourget stated. "If I get my hands on him, I'll tickle his ribs a bit, see if I don't."

They halted before the watchman-shack, near the main gate. As courtesy dictated, Koppel suggested a drink. He looked around a moment, opened a cupboard, uncorked a bottle of wine. All had a drink, even the Moslem, Ahmed, who had served in the French Army and had contracted bad habits.

Then Koppel let them out, locked the gate, and listened to their tramping a moment before going in. He did not sit down, did not pick up his book. He looked at the floor thoughtfully, then stirred up the fire in his stove, set a coffee pot and a pan full of stew to warming. Then he unbuckled the holster, slipped the big revolver into place. After that, he relighted his pipe. By that time, the smells of the food were drifting in the air.

"Smell that?" he said aloud. He stirred the stew with a spoon. "All right, you can come out. They're gone." He had his back to the bed. "My gun's hung up, what are you worrying about?

Maybe you don't speak French. Better say something so I'll know what to speak—"

There was a slight scuffling and a voice answered: "I speak French."

"All right. Sit in the chair by the table and reach for a plate." Koppel turned, holding the steaming pan. He dished out a portion before taking a good look at the stranger.

"How did you know I was here?"

"I keep my floor clean. And I had left an uncorked bottle on the table. The one you finished under the bed." Koppel put a tin mug full of coffee beside the plate, then sat down. "How long since you've eaten?"

"Cooked food?" The man looked up. "Seven days. Grabbed some bread and vegetables, here and there."

He ate swiftly, yet neatly. Koppel had seen hungry men eat before, and he knew this one needed food.

HE watched him curiously. The fellow was quite tall, perhaps taller than himself, with broad shoulders, rangy limbs. He wore blue dungarees, like an Algerian field-laborer, rope-soled sandals and an old cap. The thin cloth draped over his lean body. His face was all bones and tight, sunburnt skin, fringed with reddish beard. He might have been anywhere between twenty-six and thirty, not a kid, but a grown man, a hard man.

His grayish eyes were hard, too, as he looked at the old man.

"Why?" he asked shortly.

"You mean why I'm feeding you and covering for you?"

"That's it, yes."

"That cop said you beat it from a prison camp down south." Koppel rubbed his chin. "Also, you earned a break, having the nerve to head for this lighted place. What do you call yourself?"

"Diaz—Lorenzo Diaz."

"Listen, you're no Spaniard."

"Maybe not. But that's what this says—" The man fumbled in a pocket, flipped a greasy identification-booklet to Koppel. "I'm four inches taller than that says, too, red-haired instead of dark, but it's the very best I could steal. So my name is Diaz and I live at Mascara." The pseudo-Diaz looked at the pan, the plate was refilled. "Thanks. You're a cook, old man."

"How long were you in the Legion?" Koppel asked suddenly.

"September '39 to December '40."

"Me, more than forty years. Pensioned with honorary rank of sub-lieutenant."

"That's a long time," said Diaz, munching away.

"Deserter?"

"What do I look like? Sure."

"Why?"

"Fed up. Wanted to go somewhere and do something."

"I thought as much. How long were you in the camps?"

"January 1941 until a week or so ago, going on sixteen months."

Diaz pushed his plate away at last, wiped clean. At a nod from Koppel, he rolled himself a cigarette. As an afterthought, he took off his cap. He had a good head, the veteran thought, a strong face. Not a Spaniard, no, not a Frenchman, not a German. The man had risen to look at the books on the shelf, hands in his pockets, cigarette in a corner of his mouth, squinting through the smoke.

"Old-timers. Hugo, Dumas, Balzac, Erckmann-Chatrian—"

"Sure," Koppel agreed. "They wrote long books and you can read them over and over without getting bored."

"You've said something, old man."

"Now, you'll shave and wash up before morning. I'll go over early to a guy I know for identification papers. He has a lot, from Legionnaires who died in hospitals here. We'll find something to fit you and get an Oran card on it. Don't worry, it won't be the first time it's been done."

"Where will I stay?"

"Right here. You're not the first ex-Legionnaire I've taken in for a while. I'll introduce you to the boss, tell him you're after odd jobs in the sheds. He'll say all right. The other guys won't bother much about you, thinking the boss knows you. You know, as long as you get less salary than they do, they don't care. New guy hired, so what? But say—"

"What?"

"Did that cop, Bourget, get a good look at you? No? That's good. He's a tough cop, and pretty smart. Not likely to be around here, as his beat's around the railroad stations. But if he comes around, just keep busy elsewhere. It'll be all right for you to talk with an accent, as you'll pose as an ex-Legionnaire. But don't talk too much with that American accent."

"American?" Diaz looked up from the book he had opened.

"American," Koppel persisted. "And you didn't just pick up French from hearing it talked. You studied it in schools. Keep quiet, hang around here until I find some way of letting you make for Gibraltar—"

"Gibraltar?" Diaz took the stub from his lips. "You mean you'll help me under condition that I agree to enlist with the British?"

"The French, the American," Koppel went on, shrugging. "That's what you deserted for, isn't it?"

"No."

"I don't understand you. What then?"

"Listen, old man—I deserted in 1940. This time, I escaped. There's a difference." Diaz laughed. "Listen more—months ago, I came to the decision that I would risk my life only for my own benefit. I'm fed up with big talk, patriotism, the skull-stuffing nonsense given out to saps.

"I left camp because it was hell. Work, sun, flies, lentils and beans, beans and lentils, rotten water, watery wine. Guys were croaking right and left. Now, what I want is to live, to eat pretty well, to get drunk, to see a woman. You have been kind to me, and I don't want to lie to you, old man. If I've got to be a soldier again, anywhere, to pay for that stew, I'll go out tonight and take my chances."

KOPPEL puffed at his pipe. The other's nostrils quivered, his eyes blazed. Koppel had known Legionnaires, he recognized the symptoms. This chap had cracked momentarily, was fed up. He saw nothing worthwhile in anything.

"Don't get excited. Your accent gets thick."

Diaz flung the book he held on the bed.

"You dumb old sucker! You poor sap! A soldier, you want me to be a soldier! Look at yourself, look at this—" He waved his hands to indicate the shack. "To get this after thirty or forty years?"

"What's the matter with it?" Koppel asked.

"Say it, say it!" The younger man gesticulated. "You take me in like a starving dog, a lousy bum and I criticize your dump—"

"You're saying it for me, friend." The old Alsatian laughed without anger. "Listen, my lad, the army gave me a pension. I cashed it in to marry a dame and open a business, ten years ago. She took my dough. How was the army to blame?"

"That's the trouble with guys like you," Diaz yelled. "Blaming yourselves." He pulled up a leg of his trousers, showed a scar. "I got that at Guadalajara, machine gun." He opened his coat. "That I got in Lorraine, in 1940, machine gun. For freedom and democracy. Look at my back—gun butts and sticks. Yes, sure, twice wounded, and they put me in there and beat the life out of me to make me work like a slave. Frenchmen did it—"

"Jailers, guards." Koppel nodded. "They get fed up, too, and have to have their little amusements. Shut up and sit down, lad. You say you wanted to get drunk. There's the bottle. Start."

"I mean it, old man. I'm not going to—"

"Then what do you want to do?"

"Live. Live until this crazy business is over and men live decently again. I don't want to die for the future, I want to live in it. But what the hell's the use of talking, you can't understand what I feel."

"I know when a guy's cracked and gone," the Alsatian declared. "All right, no conditions. Stay in Oran. I'm not paid to recruit for de Gaulle or the Americans."

"I'm sorry—" Diaz faltered a bit.

"Why?" Koppel smiled. "You're welcome here. I like company. And we can talk about my books."

Someone loaned a guitar to the funny American, and he started a song in Spanish.

CHAPTER II

THE MAKE-BELIEVE SPANIARD

AT noon the following day, Koppel's guest was introduced to the owner of the warehouse as Oscar Larson, discharged Legionnaire. He had a military booklet in perfect order, hospital papers. The local police station issued him a card of identity upon a word from the business man.

Shaved, clean, neatly dressed, Larson was a very personable young man. And there was small chance that the real Larson—who had probably assumed the name himself—would turn up. He had been buried at sea off Ceylon, three years before, on his way from Indo-China to Oran for discharge. To do Old Man Koppel a favor, a military scribe had corrected the necessary documents and risked twenty years' hard labor. Among Legionnaires, one has friends or one has not.

"Your pals usually don't stay long," the boss told Koppel very soon, "but try to keep this one a while. He's amusing."

Larson was amusing—and useful. He could string electric wire, mend bells, radios, do a bit of carpenter work. Moreover, he worked for very little money.

Koppel discovered that his new friend intended to live according to plans. He drank, purposefully, deeply, often. Yet people liked to have him about. He played the guitar, sang a good baritone. Until he got drunk enough to be quarrelsome, he was an asset to a cafe, and was provided with many free drinks.

Oddly enough, his erratic behavior, which should have led to his rapid exposure and arrest, protected him. Inside three days, everyone knew he was an American. And an American without funds, which was rare. He was invited out, and while he never took official abode outside, he often failed to return to the shack for the night.

On occasions, he would be remorseful, suffer from a terrific reaction. His hands trembled, his eyes stared. Koppel was not worried. It was a spell the man was passing through, like mumps for a child, distemper in a puppy.

Bit by bit, Koppel had reconstructed his story. The pseudo-Larson belonged to a relatively prosperous American family. He had left college on impulse, to join in the fight against Franco in Spain. He had been wounded, in hospitals, had fought again. When the Loyalists had been crushed, he had fled to France, and been interned as a Spaniard. His papers had been lost, and the consuls informed him they could not help him until he had proof of his identity.

His family—and Larson was most bitter about this episode—had suggested that he had made his bed and could lie in it a while longer. The father had en-

tertained other political ideals. Koppel explained to his friend that the old man probably had not realized just what internment in a French camp could be like. By the time he had relented, the Second World War had started, and the young fellow had enlisted in the Foreign Legion with many of his comrades.

Late in May 1940, he had caught a slug through the right lung, in Lorraine. Taken across the Mediterranean Sea to convalesce, he had discovered that he should have asked for his discharge in France, and that he was expected to remain in the Legion for a full enlistment. Therefore, he had deserted.

HIS narration from that point grew confused, incoherent, for he never talked about it sober and was hard to understand when drunk. Koppel gathered that he had gone to a consulate for help, had been treated like a tramp, as he was unable to prove his words. And that the French police had picked him up as he came out, which gave him the suspicion that he had been reported by telephone.

After that had come the endless toil under a broiling sun in the Sahara, flies, rationed water, scanty food, special punishments, beatings from guards. For a man who had enlisted twice to fight for Liberty and Democracy, it seemed a poor reward to be treated like a beast of burden.

So, as he stated, he was through, fed up.

"You'll get over it," Koppel assured him.

At the end of a month, Bourget dropped in on Koppel.

"I hear you have that guy Larson living with you."

"Discharged Legionnaire. Been sick. Until he gets on his feet, I'll keep an eye on him."

"We never got the guy we were after that night," Bourget said. His eyes grew even smaller in his hard face, his black mustache lifted in a smile. "But I have a good idea where he is. A man escaped from the labor camp on the railroad at Menouara about that time, hid on a freight train for the north. We have his description. One meter eighty-three in height, red hair, strong nose, list of scars."

"So what?"

"So you don't know anyone who looks like that, Koppel?"

"No." The Alsatian shook his head gravely. "If he had been a criminal, I might worry. But a military prisoner more or less, who the hell cares? He might be an ex-Legionnaire, and you know how they stick together. You still have that night stretch around the stations?"

"Yes, but I've asked to be put back in uniform. With the Mobile Guard. You'll see me around."

"Drop in for a drink."

"Sure." Bourget rubbed his chin. "I'm still thinking of that sock in the jaw, though."

Koppel warned Larson. Bourget was a tough man and a hard cop. While he did not consider a military prisoner and a criminal on the same plane, he was unwilling to swallow an insult.

"Watch out for him."

"Bah, if he'd dared pinch me, he'd have done it long ago. And anything else I can handle."

He had regained weight, looked strong and fit. But three months passed and he showed no sign of wishing to go on. He affected to take no interest in the war, scarcely read the papers. But the first American success in the Coral Sea battle seemed to shake him for a moment.

"Knew it wouldn't go on that way long," he started, then, as he saw Koppel's eyes on him, he added with a smirk: "They're winning the war to make a decent world for me to live in!"

Koppel nodded. He knew that it would not be long now before Larson would want to get away. He was restless, uneasy, and several times he looked at the old man as if to ask him for a chance to reach Gibraltar. The old Legionnaire knew the symptoms—this chap was having to fight to keep his grievance alive.

"They have American troops in England," he said.

"Fine." Larson lifted his eyebrows. "I've always wanted to visit the Argentine."

IT was near the end of the summer, for the Zouaves had changed from helmets to chechias, when Larson faced another crisis. Koppel had left him at a nearby café, *Le Palmier,* to go on duty for the night. There was the usual crowd of Algerian Spaniards. Ricardo had brought his accordion, Juan his mandolin, and someone had loaned a guitar to the funny American.

Larson had many drinks, and was in a good mood, as Koppel heard later. He started a song in Spanish, and some man protested, against the words, against his accent, called him a fake Spaniard.

"Yes, friend," Larson retorted in Spanish, "a fake Spaniard who bled more for Spain than you ever will."

"Down with the Communists!"

"I'm not a Communist, man, I'm a humanitarian."

That started the argument. There were many Algerian Spaniards who had been for Madrid, but there were many others, brought up in Algeria, by parents who worshipped the motherland from which hunger had forced them just as it had been when they had left. The fact that they were all French citizens did not prevent their expressing ardent opinions. Words flew back and forth, red, fascist, godless bandits, bourgeois slaves. The owner later said that it had reminded him of the good old days of the Civil War, when, because of the remote siege of Madrid, revolvers popped and knives flashed in Orania in useless support of the conflicting forces.

Someone threw a bottle at Larson, who dodged. He struck at the fellow, knocked him down. There was a general free-for-all. Then, so rapidly that Koppel knew it had been a prepared job, the police appeared—and Mobile Guards instead of local cops.

Three of them, with carbines, sabers and pistols, came in, Sergeant Bourget leading. He looked even larger in the military tunic, with the row of decorations on his chest.

"What's going on here?"

"Just a friendly discussion," the owner said.

"I'll have your dive shut up if it gets much friendlier. I could hear you five hundred meters away." The sergeant grasped a man by the arm. "You. What's the matter with you, man? Who hit you?"

"He did."

Bourget and his two men stepped forward. "You hit that little guy?"

"He threw a bottle."

"Oh, he threw a bottle, did he? Who are you, anyway? Show me your papers." Bourget scanned the card. "I could check on this. But I don't want to make trouble for anybody. But remember this, the next time I hear of you hitting a little guy, I'll be around to pull your ears."

Larson fell for the bait. "Any time."

Policemen do not work for sport or glory, they work to make a living. They have to hold up their prestige before the public One of them with Quixotic notions of chivalry would be discredited and beaten very soon. For no man is stronger than all other men. So when a combative chap needs quieting without actual arrest, there are a number of allowable tricks.

Justified in ninety-nine cases in a hundred, they sometimes are misused for unjust punishment. Larson was tipsy and excited, and as he spoke he lurched a bit, raising his hands in fighting stance. Bourget and his men had expected this and went into action like a perfect team.

The two cops grasped an arm each, as if in alarm, and Bourget clenched his fist, swung hard to the jaw.

"Let him go," he said at once. "If he wants to fight, he'll get it."

The first hard blow in a brawl decides the issue. The blow had dazed Larson. He stood still a moment, blinking, dimly aware that he was being tricked into something. Then his fool pride won out and he swung at the man who had struck him.

THE sergeant instantly assumed the grave expression of a patient man who has an unpleasant chore ahead. This fool wanted a row, swung at a cop. All right, what could he do but accommodate him? He stepped aside, grasped Larson's left wrist to pull him off bal-

ance, smashed his fist like a hammer on the nape of his neck.

"Ah," he said as he hoisted his victim erect, "one is a tough guy, eh? One fights the police? One resists the law?"

He shook Larson hard, then punched him rapidly, methodically on the face, short, snappy blows that slashed and ripped. In ten seconds, the other's features were bloody pulp. Then the cop struck lower, like a piston, to the abdomen, a dozen times. After that, he freed the left hand he had passed inside Larson's shirt to choke him, shoved him away, shrugged and knocked him down with a casual backhand slap.

"There's the tough guy," he proclaimed. He reached inside his sleeves to pull down the cuffs, hardly panting. "Remember, the next time I'll run you in." Bourget swept the crowd with a glance. "Now, all of you, less noise."

He headed for the door. One of his men was heard to say, with some satisfaction: "Pretty job, Sergeant, pretty!"

Two men helped Larson back to Koppel's shack. The veteran took one look at him. "Bourget?"

"Yes."

"All right. Get a doctor."

The physician arrived soon, a round-bellied, smart Israelite.

"He's not badly hurt, Doctor," Koppel said. "But I don't want him too scarred up. He needs stitches."

The doctor nodded, worked for long minutes in silence. Larson sprawled on the bed, wincing as the needle stabbed. Bourget's calloused knuckles had worked like razor blades. Then the physician examined his body. "This hurts? Here —here? Cough—where does it hurt?" He spoke to Koppel as he wiped his hands. "I don't think he's injured internally. If he starts—"

"I know the symptoms of peritonitis, Doctor."

"All right, call me if necessary. He's taken a brutal beating. Your son?"

"Almost," Koppel replied shortly.

Three weeks later, one had to look very close for the sutures. But the physical injuries had worried the old Alsatian less than possible mental hurt. There are times when a man's spirit is a very delicate mechanism and likely to be broken.

"He pulled an old one on you, lad," Koppel suggested at last. Larson had not referred to the episode at the café directly, had not complained.

"What the devil's the difference, old man?" he asked calmly.

"You can beat him some time."

"No." Larson shook his head. "One can't get even with all the Bourgets in the world. Forget it."

"Do you want to go away?"

"No." The younger man smiled faintly, shrugged. "Why? There are Bourgets everywhere. I don't hate him any more than I'd hate an automobile that knocked me down. The driver's to blame, and I can't get at what drives him."

"I see," Koppel declared stolidly. "Fine words, philosophy. And under that, just a little bit cowed, eh?"

"Probably."

It was what Koppel had feared most. His friend had not only been battered outside but licked inside. He got drunk oftener, managed on very few francs

when Koppel and the boss cut down his money, went around the cafés playing for drinks.

Early one evening, Koppel was with him at *Le Palmier.* He started to sing in Spanish, and a voice called out: "Not that, you make-believe Spaniard! *Viva Franco!*"

Larson did not even look about for the man who had shouted. His fingers hesitated on the strings. The faint, self-deriding smile appeared.

"Very well, whatever the gentleman pays for!"

Koppel rose and walked out. He wanted to weep. This man, who was nothing to him, whose real name he did not even know, had contrived to shame him.

CHAPTER III

FRENCHMEN SHALL MARCH AGAIN!

THE November night was cold. Koppel was alone in his shack. He felt old and tired. Within a few hours, the first workmen would report for work at the barrel shed and he could go to bed. He relighted his pipe, reached for his book, left open on the table, but never finished the gesture.

A familiar vibration had started in the air, was resounding in his chest, in his brain: the cannon! And, suddenly, the thunder of guns rolled in, at first from the northwest only, then from the east. It was not anti-aircraft, some of the discharges were from nothing less than two hundred and twenties. He knew those voices—the naval defense batteries, around Arzew and Mers-el-Kebir.

He ran out into the street, locking his gates through long habit. In the darkness, he could see vague fulgurations in the sky, and thought he could discern, through the pounding, the cracking bursts of machine guns.

The people of this quiet suburb were appearing in the open, hastily dressed. Koppel ran to Ahmed, the watchman. "What is it?"

"The British, I think," the native said, phlegmatically.

That was probably true. Koppel recalled the cannonade of the execution of part of the French fleet at its moorings, more than two years before. But from the sounds, the action out there was not only naval, landings were being attempted.

"Eh, listen!" someone screâmed.

From the Zouaves' barracks came the sound of bugles, and not five minutes later, the artillery trumpets opened with their *tata-tatas.* A tall man, neatly dressed despite the hour, came from one of the villas. He bared his head, to reveal a bald skull fringed with silvery hair, and all recognized the musketeer's mustaches and beard of Major Albain, retired. He started to speak loudly.

"Oranese, Frenchmen of Algeria, your deliverers have come—the cannon you hear is that of a mighty American fleet. The Americans are landing—"

"How do you know?"

"The ships and the men out there are American. Monsieur Roosevelt, President of the Great Nation, could be heard over the radio a few moments ago, and those who doubt can listen to other messages." Albain gestured dramatically, his hat crushed in his fist, and although his audience was made up of civilians, he addressed them loudly: "Algerians, Frenchmen, soldiers, lay down your arms, and greet your deliverers! The moment has come for all to side with the right. Tomorrow, at the side of our Allies, as in the victorious days of 1918, Frenchmen shall march against the Boche! Soldiers, soldiers, put down your weapons—for those who come, come in the name of Freedom!"

Koppel laughed a little—he knew that the phrases had been composed long ago, that the old fellow had rehearsed them for months. All he had to do was to substitute "American" for "English." But he was right, that major. Although a line infantryman all his career, he was ten times right.

At this moment, policemen came through the crowd, six or seven of them, some city cops and others. Mobile Guards. Sergeant Bourget was with them, booted and helmeted, the chin strap cutting a black line across his bronzed cheek.

"Clear the streets, disperse!" he called

out, pushing the nearest persons with his palms. "Troops will be coming through, artillery. Clear the streets and do not interfere with the military!"

"Sergeant," Albain snapped at him, "I invite you to moderate your tone!"

Bourget came to attention before the retired major, who wore the rosette of officer in the Legion of Honor. His gloved hand snapped up. "I recognized you perfectly well, *mon commandant.* And out of respect, wished to say nothing to you directly. My orders are to quell any manifestation, prevent all speeches. I very much regret to ask you to return home quietly. You are a former soldier, you know what orders are."

"I would never have obeyed such orders!"

"What you would have done is not in question, Major. I intend to obey my orders."

"And I refuse to keep quiet, to budge from here! I shall do my duty as a Frenchman, which comes before any other duty!"

"For the second time, Major, I invite you to move on!"

"For the second time, I refuse! And I shall refuse until—"

There was a nearby rumble, the sound of many hoofs. The artillery batteries were swinging onto the airport road. The bugles of the Zouaves pealed from the same direction.

"For the third time, Major, I request that you move on at once!"

"And I protest"— the old officer made a quick gesture, and produced a rather small, shiny revolver—"with this—"

Bourget knocked up the man's wrist, slapping the gun from his hand, then grasped him by the throat with one big hand, shook him as a big dog shakes a cat. All politeness, all respect were gone. He was the offended cop. "Ah, one gets tough! Well, I'll show what I do when one gets tough." He extended his arm suddenly, spun Albain into the arms of his nearest man. "Under arrest—"

"But, Sergeant, that's Major Albain!"

"Rebellion, arms in hand, seditious speeches. Damn it, you fool, that's enough to arrest your own mother!" Bourget bellowed and flung his arms about, hitting at random. "Get the hell out of this. Clear this street for the military!"

A YOUNG boy had arrived, panting. "The Americans are in the port, they're at Arzew, they're everywhere! Hurrah!"

Bourget kicked him in the stomach. "That'll teach you to sing lower at four in the morning, you brat!" He surveyed the emptiness he had created, gesticulated at the groups of shadows huddling in gateways, reluctant to obey completely. "Let me see one of you out in the street. Just let me—" He helped the lad rise with a swift heave of his boot. "That's not an American boot, kid, it's a good French forty-four size!"

And he came face to face with Koppel, planted in the middle of the road.

"Ah, the Alsatian! Move on, move on!"

"I hold a city license," Koppel replied quietly. "If you lay a hand on me, I'll have you broken so fast you'll wonder how it was done. I have friends in the Department, remember."

"Then I order you to assist me."

"You can go to the devil." Koppel waited a moment for this to sink in. He knew Bourget and his peculiar mentality. The cop would have risked his life fifty times rather than his job once. He laughed sarcastically, indicated the north. "Why don't you go over there and pinch the Americans for landing without visas? They're not here, man, they're over there!"

"If I had orders, I'd go there."

Koppel noticed Madame Albain, a white-haired woman, beckoning from the stoop of the villa. He headed there, and Bourget hesitated. He had no legal right to interfere with the night-watchman so far, as Koppel had the right to carry a pistol and even to make arrests.

"Don't worry, Madame," Koppel said as he climbed the stairs. "*Monsieur le Commandant* is not hurt, and will be released soon—"

"I know that," she snapped. "They wouldn't dare! But he has some notes here that he was to send to the Americans. You're one of us, I have seen you at the meetings."

"Yes, Madame." Koppel followed her inside, and she gave him a half-dozen slips of paper covered with fine writing and tiny figures.

"Mobilization orders for the Division in case of an attempted landing," the elderly lady spoke quietly. "My husband get hold of them two or three days ago. There's the schedule of arrival of the Sidi-bel-Abbes brigade, where it will detrain, and a list of the officers who are likely to make trouble. It will be important by eight o'clock."

"I understand."

"Mr. Koppel—" She hesitated, then her dry voice went on. "Would you mind signing for them? My husband's an old soldier, and he'll be sure to say I was forgetful."

"I know how it is, Madame," Koppel agreed. He signed.

He halted on the stoop, to look over the surrounding wall. The northern sky was illuminated by flares and over near the airports the fulgurations of tracers made patterns in the fading night. The heaviest firing came from the harbor itself.

On the street, he found Bourget waiting for him.

"Where's your bum, by the way?"

"What do you mean?"

"The fake Scandinavian, the American? I want him."

"Why?"

"He's probably a spy."

"You're crazy. Or you know better."

"Maybe. But come along, now." Bourget's voice quivered with satisfaction. "I have a motive: suspected of hiding enemy agent. We'll search your dump. Watch him, Cassoul!"

"I have my eye on him, Sergeant."

The Mobile Guards escorted Koppel to his shack inside the yard. This time, they looked under the bed, in the cupboard. Koppel could not show signs of impatience. Bourget might be stupid in some ways, but he had a policeman's instinct and evidently scented something in the air. He followed the two in their inspection of the yard and warehouse. Then the third Guard appeared.

"Eh, Sergeant, the Engineers are working near the airport—and there's a crowd of civilians. Better come—"

"All right, all right."

Left alone, Koppel considered the situation. The Americans were at Arzew, that was sure. And they probably had landed contingents nearer, from the firing he heard. Six miles or more to cover. Two hours of fast walking, to which must be added time to duck the patrols, to pass through the French line of defense. That would be no great problem, as it would take time for that line to be hermetically closed. But Koppel was known to all the police, city and departmental, his presence away from his post would be suspicious.

"I'll find him." Koppel grinned. "If he could desert from the Legion and escape from a prison gang, he should be able to do this—and he can talk their lingo."

HE knew Larson's habitual haunts, and found him at the third try, in a dingy room of the servants' quarters behind a big mansion. The tall young fellow was sprawled on a low couch, fully dressed save for his sandals and cap, snoring. From the odors, it was obvious that he had been very drunk. Koppel shook him hard, without getting more than a few protesting grunts from him in answer.

"Wake up, you fool! The Americans are landing!"

"Beat it. Let me sleep."

Koppel struck a match, located an enamelware pitcher filled with water. He lifted it and poured a stream on the man's face. Larson waved his arms wildly, howled and sat up.

"You crazy? You—" He had achieved a remarkable fluency in colloquial French. Koppel let him rant and lighted a lantern on the wall. "Listen, old guy, want me to get pneumonia?"

"The Americans are landing."

"Where?" Larson was wiping his face and neck with the dingy sheet. "And can't it wait until morning?"

"They're landing here, at Oran."

"Eh? You're nuts, Koppel!"

"Listen a minute—"

Larson obeyed, and mumbled in amazement.

He got up and staggered into the yard,

looked at the lights in the sky. Then he was violently ill. He sank on a bench beside a stable door.

"How do you know it's Americans?"

"Announced on the radio." Koppel selected one of the notes given him by Madame Albain and read off Eisenhower's message. "You see, it's sure."

The young man took the paper, brought it nearer the weak light of the stable-lantern. "Yes, it's sure. So what?"

"I want you to take some papers to them."

"Me? Through the French lines?"

"It'll be easy for an hour or so longer. They're racing around like madmen—you can go down below the fortification path at the native village, head north and hit the beach somewhere. If they aren't there, you can swim to a ship—"

Larson started to laugh.

"I can swim to a ship, eh? And get myself shot?"

"They probably have orders to be careful who the devil they shoot—you can yell in American—"

"I can yell in American?" Larson thought the suggestion more and more humorous. "Listen, old man, I think I told you I was through with that stuff. I am one of the survivors who'll enjoy the better world to come, and you can't move me from that!"

"They're Americans, your own people!"

"So what?"

"You can help them, save some of them. Crazy killings, too, because the sane Frenchmen will stop all this before long."

"This sane guy has stopped all this right now."

Koppel looked at his friend in silence for a moment.

"You mean it doesn't mean a thing that your countrymen are out there?"

"Not a thing. I've been out here a long time, and what did they care?" Larson started to laugh. "They'd probably ask me for my passport, identification papers, and then throw me out with a kick in the pants when I couldn't show them. Or even remind me that I legally forfeited my citizenship by enlisting in a foreign army."

"A nation has to have laws, and laws can't foresee everything." Koppel stood over Larson, who had remained on the bench. "Are you going, or do I have to go?"

"You'll have to go, I'm afraid. I hope you can swim."

"I can do what's necessary, always," Koppel stated stiffly. "As for you, you have no guts, no bowels, no blood." The old man found himself shaking with fury. "You don't even know shame!"

"Go ahead, old man. If you're lucky, the Americans may even give you a new cross to wear. It'll look nice, pinned on a cushion over your coffin."

The night-watchman's big hand swung and struck Larson across the face. "I never could stomach that kind of talk. All right, you dog, stay where you are." He spat between Larson's feet, turned and strode away.

For a moment, he was strong, as strong as he had ever been, and he walked rapidly. Then, slowly, his steps lagged, he panted, and a pain kindled in his back. Thirty-three years ago, on the Tonkin border, a native "reformist" had lodged a slug very near his spine. Under certain conditions, Koppel was reminded of it.

"Swung too hard," he thought.

CHAPTER IV

NO PRISONERS

KOPPEL noticed that for the first time in many years he had forgotten to lock the gates. But nothing was disturbed in his shack. In any case, he would get into trouble with his boss for leaving. International entanglements, wars, were all very well, but a watchman must remain on the job. And he could not possibly return before the workers turned up. And they would report for work. They were poor men with families, so that a strange fleet bombing the harbor could not disturb their routine.

"I'll leave the gates just pushed to. They may come in and start to work, and when the boss comes he may not be told I wasn't around." For Koppel had to think of his job and his future, too—even an ex-Legionnaire born in Alsace

cannot subsist on thin air. He would get through the French lines. He knew how to do that.

From a box in the coopers' tool-shed, he drew a military tunic, a steel helmet, a cavalry carbine and fifty rounds of ammunition in pouches. These had been secreted in prevision of an entirely different eventuality, an uprising against the Vichy leaders. But they would give him, at a short distance, the silhouette of a soldier. Even if the cordon of troops had been established already between the city and the beach, he would have a chance to pass through.

In his shack, he pulled off the double-breasted tunic with plain buttons he ordinarily wore. And reached for the military garment. It moved away from him oddly, and he saw a big hairy hand, a sleeve with silver braid, then Bourget's harsh face.

"You're under arrest," the sergeant said.

"What for?"

"It is prohibited to possess weapons or ammunitions of war."

"I have a license."

"Specifically limited to a pistol or revolver by the edict of July sixth, 1940," Bourget said. "You're due for some explaining." He picked up the carbine, looked at it with interest. "Brand new. You'll have to explain where you got it." He placed the weapon against the wall, carefully. "Mind offering me a drink? I'm dry."

He filled two glasses, handed one to Koppel.

"Old man, you look as if you needed it. You're in trouble." Bourget caressed his mustache. "I thought I'd see something interesting if I hung around quietly. You think you put one over on me by hiding that big guy, eh? Know why I didn't pinch him?"

"Why?"

"I thought you'd try to get him away. I had you watched, to see whom you worked through from here to Gibraltar." The policeman examined the steel helmet. "Engineer's badge. I guess your Legion of Freedom couldn't have its own insignia. Who was boss of it around here? That old fool, Albain?"

"Don't know what you mean."

"You don't, eh, you don't?" Bourget quietly reached for the revolver, put it out of reach. "So you were going to have my job? How about resisting arrest, just a little?"

"I'm not resisting."

"Oh, but you are," Bourget declared, softly. "Your glance is very, very defiant!" The policeman was thirty-six or seven, thick through the shoulders, even if somewhat shorter than Koppel. He grasped the old man's wrist suddenly, twisted it hard. The Alsatian was spun about, repressed a groan. Chuckling, the policeman plucked the hair at the nape of his wrinkled neck. "Say ouch, old man!"

"You swine!"

"Is that a nice way for an old man to talk?" Bourget tore out the hair. Koppel did not yell, but he struggled, kicked. Bourget avoided the blows easily. "Nasty, are you? One resists arrest, eh? See here!" He spun the Alsatian around, smashed him over the nose. The blood spurted. "Go on and laugh, old man!"

Koppel fell back against the wall. He was hurt, humiliated, and normally would have fought back. But if he lifted his hand, he knew, Bourget might strike harder, knock him out. There is a very stubborn streak in most Alsatians, and uppermost in the old man's mind was the desire to deliver the message entrusted to him.

"Too old," he thought bitterly.

Yes, he was too old to take the chance. He was not sure that he had enough strength and agility left to beat this bully. He pretended utter helplessness, dropped on all fours. Bourget assisted him to his feet with mock solicitude, then promptly slapped him down again. Koppel knew only that he had gained two feet toward the weapons.

"Get up, old man, get up!"

The fist crashed to Koppel's jaw again. He was dazed. Then he heard a calm, accented voice say slowly: "Nice work, Sergeant, nice work."

BOURGET was careful. He pushed Koppel to the opposite wall before quite turning. The Alsatian's eyes cleared, and he saw his boarder, standing just inside the

"You're under arrest," the sergeant said. "It is prohibited to possess ammunitions of war."

door. One shoulder was against the jamb, the right hand held a cigarette.

"Oh, there you are!" Bourget said. "You're under arrest, too."

"Me, what for?"

"You'll be told at the station what for!"

Larson nodded. Koppel was stanching the blood dripping from his face. He was disgusted with the young man. Bourget had drawn his service revolver, but an agile man might take a chance.

"Come on, back into the yard, you bum," the cop invited. "And you, Koppel, follow him—"

"Now, listen, let's talk this over," Larson pleaded.

The same apologetic smile was on his face and Bourget took two steps toward him, angrily. "Get out!"

Larson shrugged, shifted his weight nonchalantly, as if ready to obey, and kicked the policeman in the groin. Bourget doubled over, and another kick knocked him on his buttocks. A third blow ripped the revolver from his grasp.

Then Larson replaced his cigarette at the corner of his mouth.

"Nice work, eh, Sergeant?" He lifted his foot, and the other shielded his face. Larson laughed and declared: "Too bad I'm wearing espadrilles. A few hobnails would have added the decorative effect. Hand me that gun, Koppel."

The old man obeyed, then got his own weapon. The policeman rose cautiously, very slowly, holding his hands up. "I surrender."

Larson laughed louder.

"Do you hear him, Koppel? He surrenders! Well, we don't take prisoners."

"What do you mean?"

"Koppel, remember what I told you once, that you couldn't get even with all the Bourgets in the world? That still goes. But you can make a start—"

He lifted the revolver slowly, and Bourget's mouth opened, in a ludicrous grimace of terrified understanding. He fell headlong when the other fired, did not move again.

"That's one gone. Give me those things, Koppel."

"You'll take them in?"

"Why not?" Larson laughed. "Don't think I've changed, Koppel. But no matter how you feel, you can't keep out of things. I'll do that job, and others. For you, and all the guys around here who knew what I was and didn't turn me in. There must be something, somewhere, to breed guys like you. I'll even enlist, wear a uniform again, fight." His lips twisted in a bitter grin. "With my languages, knowledge of the country and military experience, I'll sure make a corporal inside a year."

"Here's the way to go—"

"I know my way around, Koppel." Larson took the papers, hesitated, looked down at the cop's body. "Tell them I did it. There'll be no trouble, a lot of better men are getting theirs tonight. Token resistance, with real corpses and real wounds. Doesn't make much sense, does it? It may in the end. I'll see it through. Well, so long."

He gripped Koppel's hand hard.

"I'll do what I can to win this one for you. Maybe only so you can go to Strasbourg and see the French flag there, which you forgot to do last time. When it's all over, I'll be back to see you."

He was gone, as swiftly as he had appeared that night months before. The old man went into the yard to lock the gates. The sky was streaking with searchlights and rockets, the dawn quivered with gunfire. Koppel shivered, realized he was in shirt-sleeves, went back inside the shack, shut the door. He looked down at the dead man on the floor, already turned from living flesh into inert clay.

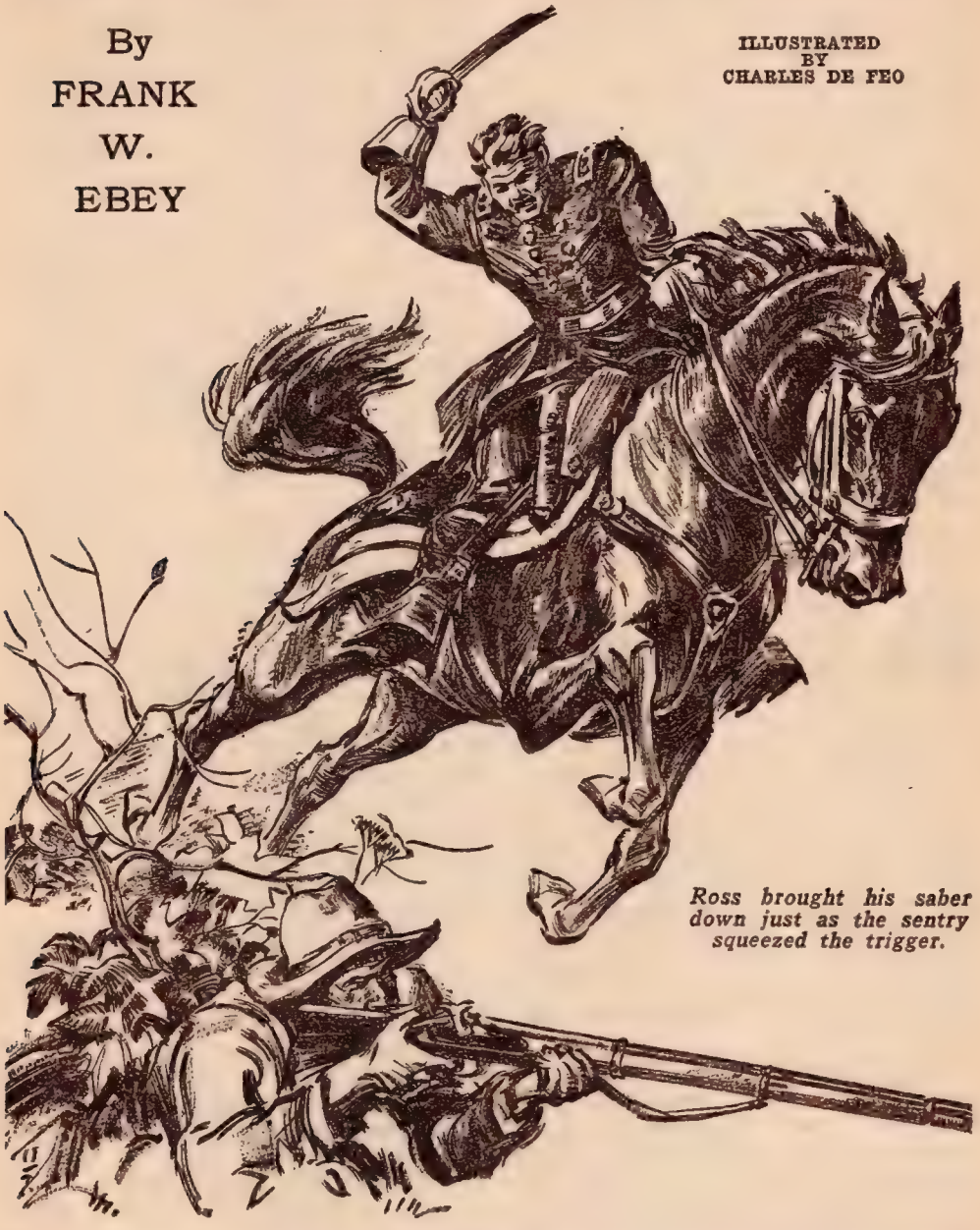
He took iodine from a shelf, stood before the mirror and dabbed at his cuts. The flesh sagged in wrinkles around his mouth and jowls. He winced as the disinfectant bit in, then started to chuckle.

"He's not kidding me, not a bit. He wanted to join his people, on the beach. That's one thing you can't tear out of yourself, your own kind. Like you can't make a dog out of a cat, or a German out of an Alsatian. Who the devil does he think he's kidding? But I helped straighten him out, I did that much." His big, deft fingers started to unroll adhesive tape. "No manners, though. He didn't even tell me his name!"

THE CADET STORE COAT

By
FRANK
W.
EBEY

ILLUSTRATED
BY
CHARLES DE FEO



Ross brought his saber down just as the sentry squeezed the trigger.

THE bright June sun and the calm after yesterday's battle were changing the face of Fort Granger. Only the smell of carbolic acid, mixed en route with the odors of horses and sweat and crushed grass and leather, drifted from the hospital tents from whence all last night had drifted the screams and groans of wounded and dying.

Sweating artillerymen were also changing Fort Granger's face as they worked to improve the hasty field fortifications around the fort's perimeter. Outside, cavalrymen were resting.

Lt.-Col. Joseph P. Ross (2nd Lt. 5th U.S. Cavalry) 6th Kentucky Cavalry, was able to observe both groups from the high ground inside the fort. The

sight came close to making him completely happy as he lolled outside the artillery major's tent and idly fingered his new field glasses. Only the mental comparison between the dapper engineer officer below at the guns and his not so dapper self marred this early afternoon.

"It's not only that uniforms are getting steeper by the minute," he complained to the bald-headed volunteer major by his side, "but this is the second time a Reb saber's slashed up a coat for me. This one's ruined forever!"

"Yep." The major surveyed the jagged slash in the coat's skirt. "She ain't a prize, I'd say."

"Line of sight, orderly," Ross shouted at the cavalry soldier who grazed an officer's charger and a trooper's mount beyond the tent.

The man turned the horses and led them a few yards away.

ROSS raised his field glasses, inspected the blue figures by Fort Granger's guns a couple of hundred yards down the slope, sighed, and lowered the glasses.

"Anyway, it's a nice day with all the wounded taken care of now and a chance to rest."

"Mostly Reb wounded, too." The volunteer major lit a cigar and sank back in the grass. "We sent a pile of 'em to glory yesterday. One of the prisoners said it looked like Bragg wanted to get his men butchered when he wasn't shooting them himself. Powerful lot of men wasted on a little old thrown-up fort like this."

"Maybe not," Ross differed. "Our supply base is at Nashville. Headquarters are at Murfreesboro and there's a division east of here at Triune. It all makes a big triangle with Franklin here one of the angles. Fort Granger's the key to Franklin and Franklin's the key to the triangle. Morgan's just over at Lebanon and the other Rebs are south of here with Van Dorn near Columbia. Bragg wants to get on our right, destroy our communications, and roll us up. It's this place he has to take to do it."

"Too deep for me." The volunteer major blew out a cloud of smoke and surveyed his rotund stomach. "That's what you yellow legs get paid for, anyway, finding out where people are."

"Maybe it's too deep for me." Ross pushed his cap back and ran his hand through the shaggy red hair that framed his freckle-peppered face. "Right now I'm figuring out a way of getting that Cadet Store coat down yonder."

"Cadet Store coat?"

"I mean a uniform coat tailored at the Cadet Store—at West Point," Ross explained. "I can tell one a mile away. They have that certain fit about them other tailoring places don't give."

He shoved his field glasses into the major's plump hands. "It's the one on the black-bearded engineer down there inspecting the works."

"It does look bright and blue," the major admitted.

Lt.-Col. Ross flicked the skirts of his own torn and faded coat.

"This was that way once. I'll get that coat from that fellow if I have to swap this little bay mare of mine for that roan nag he came in on. It's new enough for him to be in the '62 class. Just time enough for him to sprout that beard. Plebe when I was a yearling, maybe. Might have been in 'A' Company with me. He's tall enough."

"You set a hell of a store on looks," the major said, not so brashly, considering that he was thirty-five to the tall colonel's twenty-four.

"Perhaps." Ross spoke shortly. "But I'll swap him out of that coat when he comes to dinner."

The major snickered.

"He ain't coming to dinner. Look."

Ross snatched the field glasses and surveyed the knot of officers around the guns. The group was moving toward the fort's main entrance. Now the visiting engineer scribbled something on a piece of paper and handed it to the artillery colonel commanding.

Ross frowned. There was something vaguely familiar about the officer. Riley out of '62? Or— The engineer stepped back one pace and saluted the colonel. He seized the roan's reins from an orderly, swung into the saddle with easy, flowing grace, and headed out the main entrance at a walk.

"Orderly!" Ross jumped to his feet

and handed the field glasses to the major. He raced to the waiting orderly and grasped the reins just as the soldier slipped them over the bay mare's neck.

Ross mounted and started for the guns. "Wait here," he flung at the orderly.

NEAR the fort's entrance he drew rein, dismounted, and approached the gray-haired artillery colonel who commanded Granger's guns.

"What's the haste, Mister—er—Colonel?" the artilleryman demanded.

"It just occurred to me I might know that engineer officer who just left here, sir. I hated to intrude while—"

"Perhaps you do. He was Major Lawrence W. Orton, special Inspector General for the Departments of Ohio and the Cumberland. Detailed orders for every courtesy signed by General Garfield at Murfreesboro. Friend of yours?"

"Yes, sir."

"Bright youngster," the colonel snorted. "Checked on guns, rates of fire, fields of fire, ammunition supply, ranges. Made some suggestions that may aid us, sir. He's out selecting outpost positions now. He'll be back tonight."

Ross saluted and remounted.

"If you'll excuse me, sir?"

He walked his mare to the fort's entrance. A half mile up the Nashville road the engineer was vanishing over a gentle rise at a slow trot. Ross returned the salute of the sergeant of the guard and rode after the bright, blue figure at a gallop.

When Ross reached the top of the rise the engineer was out of sight. A quarter of a mile beyond the rise, Ross pulled up and hailed a dusty infantry sergeant who stood at the junction of a winding wagon road turning into the woods on the left.

"Seen an officer on a blue roan with a new coat come by?"

The sergeant spat in the dirt and pointed down the winding road.

"Went down this here side road not two-three minutes ago," the sergeant drawled. "Told him there might be Reb pickets on down, but he's a engineer officer lookin' fer outpost positions. His funeral, not—"

"Thanks!" Ross neck-reined the mare and pushed her into a gallop down the woods road.

The road, rutted and dusty, wound along to take the best advantage of grade. The bay mare stumbled in a rut, fought with a free head for her footing, and slowed the gallop. Ross pushed her back into a run.

Around the next turn the road straightened out for a stretch. Ross saw, as the mare rounded the turn, the engineer officer, dismounted. He was inspecting the roan's left hind foot. He pried something out, dropped the foot, and remounted with the same smooth, flowing grace Ross had noted before.

The distance was closed to some seventy-five yards.

"Larry!" Ross shouted.

The black-bearded engineer turned in his saddle and waved a gauntleted hand.

"Go back, Joe. This isn't cavalry business." His words floated back as he galloped ahead.

Ross spurred the little mare's stride into a belly-flattening run. The engineer's horse was favoring the left hind foot and the distance was closing fast. The straight stretch ran out and the road turned a sharp left.

Even as the mare made the turn and straightened out, Ross was aware he had gained ground.

"Larry!" he screamed again.

A GRAY picket stepped from the wood's edge just before the engineer passed the spot. Ross was aware that the man was kneeling, bringing up his bayoneted piece for a shot at the engineer's back.

Ross' right hand flashed for his saber, grasped it and pulled in one motion. He brought its flat edge down on the sentry's left arm just as the right finger squeezed the trigger. The bullet whistled into the air.

The engineer turned in his saddle.

"Joe—thanks!" he screamed against the wind.

Other pickets reached the road behind them.

A Minié ricocheted past Ross's ear with a flat, rasping buzz.

On the right the woods gave way to a

clearing where gray troops who had been lounging at its far edge, maybe two hundred yards back, were rousing to action at the sound of the picket fire.

A fuzzy-faced corporal took a snap shot at the Yankee officer on the blue roan who galloped twenty yards ahead of another blue-belly on a bay.

The ball struck the engineer high on his right shoulder, spun him around as dull red sopped through the bright blue of his Cadet Store coat, and dropped him over the near side of his roan.

An instant later the little mare stumbled on a rut. Ross was momentarily off balance. His knees drove violently inward and his left hand clutched the reins tighter as he fought for balance. His weight was over the off side. The little mare struggled to come up, lifting her left wither. Ross plunged to the ground.

Lead screamed overhead and spurted dust at the side of the road as the scattered firing from the gray infantry company grew general. The bay mare plunged ahead.

Even as Ross rolled over he caught a glimpse of the engineer getting to his feet, whirling as the bay mare raced by him in panic. As the engineer whirled, his good left hand clutched for a bridle rein, held grimly as the mare dragged him ten yards before she came to a whirling, rearing halt.

Painfully, but still with the same swift grace, the engineer mounted, bent low and came back at a gallop.

"Pull up, Joe!" he screamed above the noise of the musketry.

Ross grasped stirrup and arm as the engineer swept by. He threw his right leg over the mare's back and caught the cantle as a bullet tugged at the flying skirt of his faded blue coat.

The burdened little mare made the shelter of the woods down the road as bullets snarled beneath her and one creased her neck.

Gray pickets, firing as they ran, were advancing from that direction.

Ross reached over and tugged at the off rein.

"Right, Larry," he directed. "I know this country."

The mare plunged into the woods as both officers ducked low-hanging branches.

Ross pulled a revolver from the engineer's holster.

"You ride. I'll use this!"

Behind them and on their left pickets shouted and beat the woods. Ahead, a solitary gray sergeant rose and leveled his piece.

Ross threw the revolver down, squeezed the trigger. The gun jumped in his hand and the man slid back and away.

The engineer slumped forward in the saddle, limp. Ross reached around him, grasped the reins, and held the man in the saddle as he pulled the mare to a walk.

The firing was slackening on the left and the sounds of pickets in the woods grew fainter. After minutes that dragged like those before an assault, the mare reached a trail in the woods. Ross headed her toward the Nashville road. Three hundred yards ahead a blue picket hailed them—

INSIDE Ross's tent, the black-bearded engineer took a whiskey toddy from the orderly and leaned back on his host's cot.

"Neither fairly thrown back there, Joe," he declared weakly. "No champagne to stand for."

"Neither, Larry," Ross agreed. "Shoulder easier?"

"Lots, thanks. Good toddy, too." The engineer glanced down at his class ring. "Funny, our meeting today after not seeing one another since graduation."

"Yes." Ross drummed his fingers on a camp stool. "Graduation. I guess the sixty-three class goes tomorrow."

"Nice to be back there." The engineer closed his eyes. "Old West Point. I'd like to be back on Flirtation Walk tonight with Elsie."

"I wish you were, Larry," Ross said earnestly.

A scratch sounded on the tent flap.

"Yes?" Ross inquired.

A brown hand thrust a military telegraph blank inside. Ross studied it briefly and handed it back.

"Authority from Murfreesboro. Take it to the provost marshal."

"Joe—" the engineer inquired. "Did you recognize me or the coat?"

"Both, Larry. I knew from its fit it was from the Cadet Store. When you mounted—well, four years in the riding hall alone won't do it for you—I just knew it was you, old ramrod."

"Thanks." The engineer accepted the compliment briefly. "I took good care of that coat. Sorry that shot ruined it. You saved my life this afternoon—maybe I saved yours. That evens us up. You take the coat and—"

"No, Larry," Ross cut in. "No. I—"

"Remember what Colonel—that is, General Lee always said when he was commandant? About duty being the sublimest word in the English language?"

Outside the tent a detail halted. The engineer sat up. Gently, Ross helped him to his feet.

"Well, old ramrod," Ross commenced. "We always bragged about Sixty-one always hanging together. It's too bad that now we have to—" His voice broke.

"Not now, Joe," the engineer said gruffly. He extended his right hand. "I did my duty and you did yours. I lost. Good-bye and—and please take the coat."

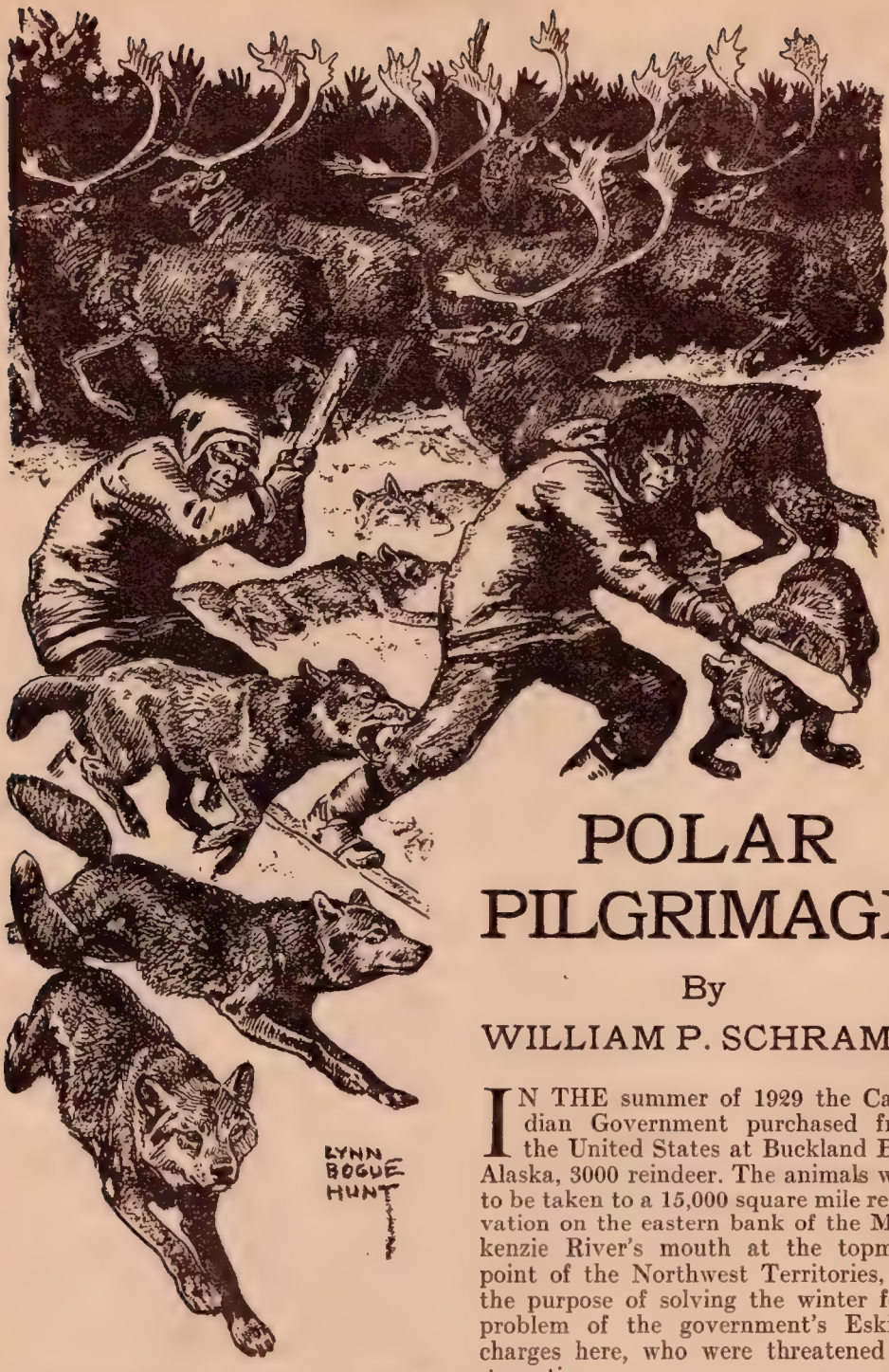
"Good-bye, Larry."

The engineer straightened to his full six feet and stepped outside the tent.

"I never want to see another Cadet Store coat," Ross declared bitterly, chokingly.

The slap of the sentry's taut gun sling sounded in the ears of Lt.-Col. Joseph P. Ross (2nd Lt. 5th U.S. Cavalry), 6th Kentucky Cavalry, West Point, 1861, like the crack of doom.

No one ever learned how it sounded to Major Lawrence W. Auton, Confederate States Army, West Point, 1861. For Violation of the 82nd Article of War, "in that, at Fort Granger, Tennessee, on or about June 8, 1863, Lawrence W. Auton, alias Orton, did spy—" by sentence of a drum head court martial and with the telegraphic approval of General Rosecrans, he went to the gallows. He went straight and silent and unflinching, his shoulders squared and undrooping in his blue Cadet Store coat.



They sped among the brutes, cracking skulls with their bludgeons.

POLAR PILGRIMAGE

By

WILLIAM P. SCHRAMM

IN THE summer of 1929 the Canadian Government purchased from the United States at Buckland Bay, Alaska, 3000 reindeer. The animals were to be taken to a 15,000 square mile reservation on the eastern bank of the Mackenzie River's mouth at the topmost point of the Northwest Territories, for the purpose of solving the winter food problem of the government's Eskimo charges here, who were threatened by starvation.

The only way the deer could be gotten there was to drive them from Buckland Bay along Alaska's Polar Sea coast, a

distance of 1800 miles across the top of the world!

It was an undertaking that no white man had the endurance for. So, after long searching, the government chose four Lapps and eight Eskimos as herders. The Lapps were chosen for their knowledge and experience with reindeer, and the Eskimos because of their acclimated endurance to the bitter Arctic winter. A Lapp named Andy Bahr, whose age was in the seventies, was placed in command of the outfit. For several weeks before the start of the long trek the Lapps trained the Eskimos in the art of handling reindeer; for quick travel the Eskimos were also taught how to use skis. The Lapps not knowing how to handle a dog-team, they broke a number of deer to harness and sled.

In the first week of November the 1800-mile drive began. It had to be done during the winter when the rivers, swamps and innumerable treacherous bogs were frozen solid, so that the deer could cross them safely. With three of the Eskimos driving husky-teams and the Lapps' reindeer harnessed to sleds loaded with supplies, and the others on skis, the great herd of deer was driven forward in the bitter, gray twilight of the Arctic winter. Snow was falling heavily, making the faint daylight unusually dim.

The Eskimos were accompanied by their wives and children, the womenfolk being needed to do the cooking and mending for the men. Along with them, riding on one of the sleds, went an aged Eskimo witch-doctor or medicine-man named Qualik, and his elderly spouse. The wizard went along to serve as counselor and "doctor" to the Eskimos and as interpreter between them and the Lapps, particularly to Bahr, who was in command. Whole villages of Eskimos had come to Buckland Bay to see the start of the drive.

WITHOUT difficulty both men and deer weathered the terrific blizzard that soon blew furiously from the Polar Sea. When the wind had abated the trek was resumed in the sub-zero twilight. Shortly, the first serious difficulty was encountered. It was a river about two miles wide and its ice, blown clear of all snow, was dangerously slippery. What was more, the region was one in which there was no moss for feed. The herd had to be gotten across the river without loss of time. Slowly the herders forced the deer onto the ice, on which they immediately slipped, fell and lay helpless, some with their legs broken. Quickly the men drove back those that were still on the river bank. The animals could never be gotten across the glassy surface without great loss.

The deer that had broken their legs were slaughtered for food. Then, for days, the aged Bahr and his fellow-Lapps planned for a way to get the huge herd across the river. The Eskimos were indifferent about it. Finally one of the Lapps got an idea. The ice could be roughened by laborious chipping. After a day's search the river's narrowest point was found and there both Lapps and Eskimos set to work with axes and hatchets to roughen a wide path across more than a mile of ice! Day and night, in relays, the Eskimos and Lapps hacked away on the ice in the intense cold until their fingers stiffened on their hatchet handles, and they found it difficult to straighten up because of aching backs. Meanwhile the hungering deer pawed in the deep snow, only to find bare ground beneath it.

At the end of a fortnight the rough path was finished. On the other side of the river luscious moss had been found under the snow. With all haste the wearied men bunched the hunger-weakened deer together and drove them to the river and onto the path. The animals were gotten across without the loss of a single one. Then all hands were given a respite. Going to their tents, all crawled into their sleeping bags and slept the slumber of the exhausted, not even waking to eat. The halt lasted a week during which the men slept and rested and the deer burrowed frantically into the snow for moss and regained their strength.

Once more the march eastward was undertaken. When a short distance had been covered another furious blizzard struck. For seven days it raged. When

it abated it was discovered that a herd of several hundred harassed caribou had sought shelter amongst the reindeer. The caribou had to be separated from the deer before the advance could be continued, but how? For two days the herders labored futilely to drive out the caribou. Some of the males proved vicious and more than once a man had a close call from a charging caribou bull, only his fleet-footedness on skis saving him.

At last a resourceful Lapp evolved a scheme: it was to frighten the caribou with fire. Oil-soaked skins were fastened to the tips of the long walrus spears of the Eskimos and lighted. With improvised torches the natives then made their way among the deer, shouting and waving. Being more easily frightened than the deer, the caribou rushed out from the herd and once out, one force of the men continued driving them while the others drove the deer in the opposite direction. Thus the separation was successfully accomplished, although more than a score of deer were lost through their being among the caribou.

After the blizzard the weather gave the herders a welcome break. For some days the silent, bitter calm of the North prevailed over the white barrens. The aurora borealis blazed forth in all its grandeur, lighting the white landscape. The brilliance of color made the deer restless and inclined to wander. In shifts the natives rode herd over the animals all night.

In the night silence the natives heard the approach of a new menace to the herd. Wolves! The eerie outcries in the distance were a warning that sooner or later a lupine battalion would come sweeping down from the hills. The next night, due preparations were made to meet an attack. Because of the danger to the deer no firearms could be used. But the diminutive Eskimos and Lapps had a way by which they would be able to hold their own against the savage killers of the North that out-numbered and out-weighed them in pounds. Their weapons were heavy, knotty clubs the length of baseball bats.

That night the great herd was bunched together in a place where the snow lay deep. At Bahr's order all hands remained on night duty. By the wind the natives knew well from what direction the wolves would launch their attack, and on that side the men with their bludgeons mingled with the milling deer.

The attack came with cunning strategy. When still some distance from the herd the approaching pack of shaggy, loping brutes suddenly split, one half racing for a gully across which the faint breeze blew from the direction of the huddled deer. The other half continued coming swiftly toward the herd. The men were aware of what was going on. By now the ambush section of the pack had disappeared in the gully, where its members lay in wait for the oncoming stampede of the deer that the other half of the pack would start toward them.

As the pack came charging the herders rushed out from amongst the deer to meet it. At the unexpected appearance of the human enemies the reaction of the wolves was that of startled surprise. They half halted and then galloped sideways into the deep snow. The snow proved a handicap to the wolves, but not to the herders on skis. They sped among the brutes and then skull-cracking and back-breaking blows of the bludgeons echoed in the night silence of the hills as the small natives struck the wolves down. Before a score had been laid out the pack was fleeing in scattered numbers for the hills. The wolf attack had been successfully beaten off.

EARLY the next morning the trek was resumed and for several weeks it continued with only minor setbacks due to severe weather. Before long the bitter cold gave way to the warmth of spring. The snow became slushy, the ice began breaking in the streams, the numerous bogs and swamps softened dangerously —and baby deer made their appearance. No more marching could be done until the winter once more sealed the streams and quagmires. Camp was made for the summer. The work of the herders became light; all they had to do was to keep the deer from wandering too far.

Summer was only a matter of weeks, and then the winter gripped the North again. The brief summer had done wonders for the deer; they had become fat and sleek and full of life from the abundant forage. The numerous youngsters had grown strong and they more than made up the losses suffered during the winter. Once more the advance eastward was resumed.

That winter death stayed the march several days. The hardship of the going proved too much for Qualik, the aged Eskimo wizard. Qualik's end being certain, Bahr halted the trek so that Eskimo custom might be observed. With the help of one of the Eskimos, Qualik's aged spouse built an igloo on the top of a hill. The snow-hut finished, the old man crawled into it; along with him went his belongings, his spears, bow and arrows, cooking pot, and his clothes, which he would need in the next world. Then his faithful wife fitted a snow block into the igloo's entrance and sealed the cracks with half-melted snow which immediately froze hard. Lastly she and the Eskimo walked backwards down the hill to the camp, this so that Qualik's spirit would not pursue them by following their footprints. Thus, in accord with strict tribal custom, Qualik was left behind to make the long journey to the next world. When the two arrived back in camp, the march was hurriedly resumed.

When the second winter ended the Eskimos had had enough, not alone of hardships, but they were homesick. In a body they served notice to Andy Bahr that they were leaving, whether his permission was forthcoming or not—and leave they did, starting back with their husky-teams on the long return trek to Buckland Bay. With his fellow-Lapps Bahr established summer camp. The few weeks of warm weather gave Andy enough time to find other Eskimos and to break them in to handle the deer herd.

At the beginning of the drive it had been thought that its destination would be reached in eighteen months or in two winters. Now the third winter was in the offing and the Mackenzie River was still hundreds of miles away. But when the winter's first heavy snows blanketed the barrens, Bahr's hopes were high that the great river would be reached and crossed and their destination arrived at before spring broke. But it was not to be. At the start several long delays were brought about by fierce blizzards that lasted for days and obscured the dim daylight into inky night. Everyone remained indoors and for weeks the specter of starvation stalked men and animals.

During the calm that followed the last of the black hurricane a heart-breaking disaster befell the expedition. No wolf signs had manifested themselves and the herders relaxed their vigilance. One night a lupine battalion struck, and in addition to inflicting a heavy loss in dead and wounded, it scattered the deer in no fewer than a hundred separate herds over the white wilderness. A halt lasting over a month was made, the time being spent by the herders in rounding up the frightened deer. Several hundred were never found.

More trouble came. From the beginning Bahr had been aware that the replacement Eskimos did not obey his commands as willingly as had the previous ones. Perhaps Andy did not handpick the natives as the government had done, nor did he have the wide field from which to choose better. Furthermore, there was no longer a Qualik to back up his authority. Since the last blizzard when starvation had threatened them, for which the Eskimos had blamed Andy, rebellion had been smoldering among them.

On this particular day Bahr's fellow-Lapps were miles away from camp rounding up wolf-stampeded deer. Bahr was alone with the Eskimos keeping the main herd together until the Lapps returned with the strays. The Eskimos decided that the time was ripe to strike. Their plan was to do away with the aged Andy, hide his body, and then make off with the big herd, they being confident that in these trackless white wastes the white man's justice would never find them.

Shortly Bahr was engaged in dodging among the deer to keep out of reach of the Eskimos. Hour after hour the aged

Lapp played a grim game of hide-and seek amongst the milling animals, hoping that his fellow-Lapps would return before it was too late for him.

Help finally came from an unexpected source. It having been thought that the native herders would get the deer to the reservation during the second winter, and information having reached Ottawa that they had failed to arrive, government officials had become duly concerned over what might have happened to them. During the summer two airplanes were dispatched to search for them. For weeks the aviators combed the Polar Coast wilderness without finding a trace of the herd. When winter arrived the flyers had equipped their planes with skis and made a last search before returning home to report that the great herd had seemingly vanished without a trace. And on that day one of the planes at last spotted the deer.

The Eskimos had never seen an airplane before. At the sight of the roaring ship they were thoroughly cowed, and being superstitious, they believed that Bahr possessed magical power and had summoned the plane from heaven. The ship effected a landing and obtained the much sought for information. Having gained the upper hand over the Eskimos and the other Lapps having returned with the stray deer, Andy made haste to get rid of the plotters. They were permitted to take enough provisions to last them until they would reach an Eskimo settlement and then sent on their way with their dog-teams. Other Eskimos were obtained to take their places.

By the time these raw recruits were trained to use skis and to handle the deer and more strayed animals had been gotten back to the herd, the winter was at an end. Once more summer camp was made.

THE fourth winter's advance was begun with a vengeance. On this march the silent far-flung white plains were left behind. The herders came to what had so far loomed near but always remained as distant as ever—the Arctic Rockies, their highest peaks shrouded in snow-clouds. The mountain barrier had to be marched through. In the dim daylight of the bitter winter the Lapps found passages through the mountains. But when once the deer had been shepherded into them, all became frightened and abandoned hope for their lives, except the indomitable Andy Bahr. Terrific sub-zero winds blew through the passages that nearly bowled men and deer into yawning canyons. At other times half-mile-wide avalanches roared down the mountain sides, threatening men and animals with sudden death and oblivion. But in spite of these perils Bahr drove the frightened herders relentlessly forward among the sinister peaks until the open plains behind the mountains were reached.

At last their longed for goal, the Mackenzie River, hove in sight. But spring had arrived. The mighty river's ice had already broken up so that it could not be crossed. Once more camp had to be made and the deer herded through the summer. Winter came again and silenced the big river's turbulent waters. Quickly the huge herd was driven across the ice of the Mackenzie's wide mouth, and to its final destination—the reservation on the river's eastern bank.

Thus ended the long trek and a mighty saga of adventure that will be told in Eskimo lore for many years to come.

FOR DRINKING MEN ONLY!

By
JAMES VALE DOWNIE

ILLUSTRATED
BY
L. STERNE
STEVENS

Senator Maitland and Colonel Caskey were both shooting high and glass was raining down from the chandelier.

AN
OFF-THE-TRAIL
STORY

I CAME across Dusky Vaughan one December afternoon in the lounge of the Machinery Club. He was wearing the uniform of a major of engineers and was sprawled hull-down in a green leather chair. The long fingers of his right hand encircled a tall glass half full of whiskey and soda and ice cubes. Dusky raised one eyebrow at me, the other at the steward, and in two minutes I was planted in another lounge chair with a similar glass of refreshment at my elbow.

"It's Old Woodchuck Rye," he said in a voice half a tone lower than the hoot of a Cortlandt Street ferry, fumbling for her slip. A blizzard lashed the big windows which overlooked the Hudson.

"Not as good as Gurgling Starlight of the Purple Meads, but drinkable," he boomed on.

"If it's not a military secret, Dusky," I inquired, "when do you sail and whither?"

Vaughan is a lanky, black-browed Irish construction engineer. In peacetime his business is laying pipelines, building airports, deepening harbors. Now that the nation is at war, it's reasonable to assume that he'll be digging dirt and moving it in some hot and cursed corner of the world.

"Tannachar is a little old village on the Ohio," gloomed Vaughan, evasively. "It's a backward sort of town."

He seemed low in spirits—a little sorry for himself. In any case I was not much interested in Tannachar. I gulped my drink, spoke of some pressing business in lower Manhattan and pulled myself half out of the chair. Vaughan frowned, stared at me as though not very sure who I was.

"Do you know Carbon Jaw Jugsmith, President of Portmarine Pipeline Company?" he inquired. "He is an ignoramus—and worse. He fired me once for getting off a survey. But don't forget that when we were laying that eighteen-inch pipeline from Louisiana to Lake Erie it was C. J. Jugsmith who gave orders to survey the line right down Tannachar Valley and bung through the middle of this old Indian graveyard. Can you imagine that?"

"It is difficult to picture, Dusky," I said. "I'm only sorry I can't wait to—"

"I'll tell the world it's difficult to picture," continued Vaughan. "An Indian graveyard is no place for a pipeline. This old Delaware chief, Tannacharison, didn't want to be disturbed. And I can't say I blame him. Do you?"

"Well—no," I replied. "I suppose Jugsmith figured that if he'd been sleeping peacefully there for all those years he wouldn't mind moving over to make room for Portmarine."

"Jugsmith didn't figure anything about the poor Indians. He didn't give them a featherweight of consideration. All he figured was, 'get on with the ditch, you loafers!' What's the result? The result is that our ditcher broke down in Tannachar Gorge. Main carrier-shaft and a truckload of bucket teeth, which we had to send to Toledo for. Let me tell you there was something hard in the bottom of that valley. Harder than granite. Traprock wouldn't have brushed off those manganese teeth as though they had been made of cheese. That's why I say I will dig no sarcophagi. I'll dig anything else they ask me to, but no mummies. Look what happened to the fellows who dug up Tutankhamen."

I began to understand Vaughan's mood. He was not drunk. He was being sent to Egypt and he did not like it. I happened to know he'd been in Iraq two or three years before, laying a pipeline for the British, with whom he had not gotten on too well. They had attempted to tell Vaughan how to lay their pipeline.

"Why worry about it, Dusky," I said comfortingly. "They may dump you in Eritrea after all. There are no mummies there—"

"Tannachar," interrupted Vaughan, "was about the most unprogressive town I have ever been in."

He boomed along like a derelict oiler in a fog and I listened to the preposterous story of Tannachar on the Ohio—not because I wanted to, for a good deal of it seemed to be sheer nonsense and I had plenty of other things to do with my time. But he seemed to want to talk and somebody had to listen. I cannot, naturally, have recourse to the hot-riveted phrases and spine-tingling metaphor with which Dusky now and again reinforced his appalling testimony and overcame such scruples as arose in my own mind; but, in justice to Dusky, who has gone somewhere on a "mighty mission," I should like to put his somewhat disconnected narrative into a form as coherent and credible as may be under the circumstances.

UPON a cold evening late in October (Vaughan said) the pipeline job was stalled at the upper end of Tannachar Creek, waiting for repairs for the trencher. Two hundred sand hogs and chiselmen were camped in trucks and trailers about half a mile from the river. They

were in a desolate region of wilderness and abandoned farms, of high barren hills, sparsely covered with scrub pines and buffalo grass and slashed by deep wooded ravines, picturesque but depressing.

Dusk sheathed the desolate hills, but it was night in the gorge when Vaughan, having had a bitter argument with his master mechanic (over the trenching machine, which lay helpless in the bottom of the gulch, covered with the torches of the repair crew like a dismal Christmas tree) decided to make a personal inspection of the survey down the creek and through the village to the riverbank. He went alone. Fitzgerald, the construction boss, had said that the stakes set by the surveying crew a month before had mysteriously disappeared. This seemed to be the case. Vaughan found no stakes.

At the lower end of the valley there was a mound about twenty feet high, extending from one wall of the gorge almost to the other. Tannachar Creek tumbled noisily through a natural sluice at one end of the mound. Since the walls of the gorge were formed of sheer sandstone here, tapestried with ivy and wild grape, there was no way of reaching the village other than by crossing the mound. This Vaughan attempted to do—being at the moment sober and in full possession of his senses.

When he was on the middle of this embankment, in which the bones of the former Delaware chieftain, Tannacharison, along with the relics of many hundreds of his tribe, were said to repose, Dusky experienced an earthquake. This agitation of the ground was purely local and was not recorded by any seismographic instrument at any station maintained for the observation and recording of such phenomena. Nevertheless, the upheaval was quite severe. At one moment Vaughan felt as though he were trying to keep his footing on a sounding whale—at the next he seemed to be sprawled upon a bucking bomber.

In the end he was tumbled clear off this amazing burial mound and rolled, as it chanced, into the meadows beyond the mound—not back into the gorge.

Vaughan states that he had had nothing to drink worth mentioning for a week prior to this evening.

He picked himself up and looked over the fields toward the dark, scattered bulks of a sparsely lighted village. Rags of bluish mist lay in the hollows. A light fog veiled the distant rolling river. In the purple west he saw a slender crescent moon running frantically like a frightened child, after the departing day.

The mysterious thing about the meadow was that it was faintly illuminated by incandescent toadstools. These phosphorescent fungi excited Vaughan's curiosity almost as much as the heavings and contortions of the burial mound and he promised himself that he would come back and investigate both the mound and the mushrooms at the earliest opportunity.

Meanwhile, since he had gotten so far, it seemed advisable to go on into town, find the city engineer and endeavor to learn what had happened to the missing survey stakes; also what cooperation could be expected from him and the local authorities in connection with the excavation of a trench through the town to the shore of the Ohio River, for Portmarine's precious pipeline.

Vaughan asserts that he laughed heartily, many a time later, at his own ignorance of the whole situation in Tannachar, and at how naive he was to hope for any constructive assistance from anybody in that village.

VAUGHAN kept to the middle of the street. Many of the frame buildings huddled along the sidewalk leaned inward until their gables almost met. In front of an abandoned storeroom, a wooden awning sagged on bent and broken supports. No facade stood erect. Every structure in the town slumped in two directions. Some buildings leaned over the street and a few crouched back from it, but all were canted toward the river. It was this fact, Vaughan concluded, which produced the startling and very disturbing illusion that the river was not level, but banked like the end of a racing-bowl. For a moment or two, until he hit on this explanation, he was quite uncomfortable.

Keeping to the center of the cobbled street he covered slowly, with measured stride, the course that would be followed by the pipeline.

Lights in some of the houses indicated a few living creatures of some description in the place. Here and there a spark showed through a chink in a battered wooden shutter or a pencil of wan light came through the thong-hole over the latch of a deep-set portal. There were some cats in the town—he saw the paired green sparks of their eyes in dark corners—but no dogs.

Vaughan saw nobody until he reached a little square with a circle of gaunt and leafless trees and a watering-trough in the center. There was a two-story brick edifice with a belfry on the right, probably the town-hall, and a long three-story frame building across the square. Four lamp posts glimmered at the corners of the square and a fifth over the rear entrance of the city building, where Vaughan discovered a tall iron gate. As he approached, this gate swung open and a bent figure in a caped overcoat shuffled out. The heavy gate swung open as though out of plumb and the old man struggled desperately to close it. Vaughan went to his assistance, pushed the gate shut and held it so, while the oldster inserted a mammoth brass key in the lock and turned the bolt.

"I am obliged, suh, ten thousand times," gasped the ancient. "You are a stranger, I surmise, in Tannachar, and are perhaps unaware that we have incarcerated here one of the most dangerous guerrilla fighters ever to lacerate the fair bosom of the great state of Kentucky in fratricidal strife."

"A Kentucky gangster, huh?"

"Colonel Caskey!" whispered the old man.

"Ah . . . . I did not know."

"Exactly. We keep him in practically solitary confinement. A most dangerous and bloody minded man. The rebels have offered us twenty Union colonels for him but we dassen't let him loose."

"Ahem," said Vaughan staring. "I—I did not know that you had a prisoner of war here. I am Vaughan—superintendent for the—for a—"

"Well . . . well . . . I'm pleased to meet you, Mr. Vaughan. You are just in time to join me in a julep at the Temple of Juno tavern across the square. I am happy, indeed, to make your acquaintance."

He held out a gnarled hand.

"Did you tell me your name?" fumbled Vaughan.

"Bless me, no, I didn't. And I must tell you. Indeed I must, while I think of it. Thinking of things is not easy, as you will find in Tannachar, Mr. . . . . Mr. . . . ."

"Vaughan."

"Ah . . . . it's easy for you. You are young and supple. But hurry . . . . we shall be late. The others are already there and there are important matters to come before the society."

"What society?"

"You must have heard of the Philo Christomatheon Literary Society of Tannachar."

"Well, no, I hadn't . . . . But I will take a highball with you, Mr. . . ."

"Colonel Caskey, sir."

"Oh . . . . so you. . . . "

"C.S.A. But we must hasten, Captain. . . ."

"Vaughan."

"A damned Yankee, of course."

"Well no, Colonel. I'm Irish."

"All the same. But no matter. I have drunk with Yankees. I have tippled with the Irish. I am so damned thirsty at this moment that I would drink with the Devil if I could find me a tankard with a long enough spout."

"Does this town have such a functionary as a city engineer?" Vaughan interjected.

"I believe so, Captain Vaughan. Tannachar, you must understand, is a very backward place; but there is a city engineer I am confident, and if so he is probably at the Temple of Juno tavern."

"And the Burgess?"

"Also at the Temple of Juno—in the bar—which is also the hall of the Literary Society."

THE Temple of Juno flanked the square and faced the river, with a balcony across its front and a pillared entrance toward the square. A lamp with a rusty meta

shade hung under the porch at a noticeable angle. The building as a whole had a pronounced slump toward the river.

Vaughan pulled up in the middle of a broad flagged sidewalk.

"How," he demanded, "can a man tell when he is drunk in this town?"

"It is very simple," responded Colonel Caskey cheerily. "When you hear the bells—steamboat bells all chiming in unison—the beatific state of alcoholic saturation has arrived. And I am happy to assure you that Senator Maitland, the proprietor, despite the fact that he is a damned Yankee, keeps an excellent cellar. He has Kentucky whiskey that was brought here in Jackson's administration—steamboat loads of it—an inexhaustible supply. It is smooth as honey and as mellow as September sunshine. A life-preserving, soul-satisfying distillation of Kentucky corn. Why do you ask?"

"I was just wondering."

"Quite so. But you must pay no attention to what you see in Tannachar. Listen for the bells."

"The place gives me duck bumps."

"I dare say . . . . I dare say. But a draught of Senator Maitland's Gurgling Starlight of the Purple Meads shall soothe away all misgiving and regret."

"The way you tell it it must be so. Let's go on in."

"Ah. . . . Just a word of caution, Captain."

"About the Starlight?"

"Precisely. If upon drinking let us say a dozen glasses of Senator Maitland's whiskey you do not immediately feel that certain uplift and exhilaration which you have come to expect as the normal effect of the consumption of alcoholic liquors, do not, therefore, conclude that you have been drinking spring water perfumed with mint; for such is not the case. The influence of Gurgling Starlight, like that sweet spell of Pleiades, creeps upon the sin-sick soul as gently and imperceptibly, but as surely and persistently, as a black cat stalking a whippoorwill in the summer dusk. The wise tippler will wait, serenely patient, and with full confidence that the message will arrive."

"I get you . . . . a delayed wallop."

"You might so describe it. But let us enter at once."

DUSKY says he went into the Temple of Juno Tavern to see if he couldn't find the borough engineer and get some information about the line that Portmarine's engineers had surveyed down the Tannachar Creek valley and through the town. He couldn't understand what had happened to the stakes and he hoped the borough engineer would know. He hoped he wasn't going to have any trouble with the town authorities at this late date. The right-of-way had all been taken care of long ago by the legal department of Portmarine.

The Temple of Juno Taven had once been a hotel of some magnificence. It was a white frame building only three stories high, but a city block long, with four white wooden pillars in front, that is, toward the river. Vaughan says that as he and Colonel Caskey in his C.S.A. uniform rounded the front of the hotel he found himself looking across a little park, down a cobbled beach at the river, which seemed to be standing up on its edge, with two steamboats and a coal barge swinging around the bend on their sheer boards. He noticed that the white pillars of the hotel porch weren't plumb. The corner pillar was canted several feet out of line. Its foundation had probably been undermined by flood water.

Vaughan says it made him dizzy and he almost fell over trying to stand at the same angle as the hotel porch columns.

Vaughan followed Colonel Caskey into a wide hall. He saw a mahogany staircase and a glass chandelier loaded with half burned candles, some of which were lighted, while others were not. The hall was beautifully illuminated with wall sconces. It was a magnificent place, but seemingly deserted. The woodwork was white and the walls were paneled with mirrors, so that a person couldn't tell how many candles there were. There seemed to be hundreds of the wall sconces, but probably there weren't actually over a dozen or so. He saw re-

flections of the old soldier and himself on all sides.

Colonel Caskey led the way through an archway at the left and Vaughan found himself in the most impressive barroom he had ever seen. This room also was a splendor of white paint; with mirrors and more silver sconces; but its glory was the mahogany bar, as long as two bowling alleys, at the right. Behind the bar at such a distance that Vaughan regretted not having a spy glass to turn on him, there was a white-haired, white-coated darky bartender. A gentleman in the maroon dress suit of antique cut with maroon stock and long, white silken hair like Buffalo Bill's, got up from a Louis Quinze sofa and came forward. He was smoking a black stogie about a foot long and as crooked as a dog's hind leg.

"Good-evening, Colonel Caskey," said the white-haired man pompously. "I trust I see you well."

"Tolerable, Senator," replied the prisoner of war. "I have brought you a guest. I present, Captain. . . ."

"Vaughan," said Vaughan.

"Delighted, Captain Vaughan. What regiment?"

"I am with Portmarine Pipeline," said Vaughan, with an apologetic gesture at his short trench coat and high boots. "We're going through Tannachar tonight. . . . And we are pressed for time, Senator. In fact we're behind our schedule and we're driving night and day to get to the lakes by the end of the month. I came into the village to find the borough engineer and get some information. My crew is stalled up in the gulley waiting for some repairs for our ditching machine. Can you tell me, Senator, where I can find the engineer?"

"Indeed, I fear I cannot."

"But there *is* an engineer in Tannachar, is there not? Colonel Caskey said he might be in the hotel."

"QUITE possibly," said the senator. "There was an engineer at one time—a man named Allzeit or Altzhous or some such name . . . You recollect Colonel Caskey? . . . He was a German . . . A Hessian, by the Eternal . . . I'd forgotten that . . . Came out here after the war and settled on a chunk of Depreciation Land. Bought it from a Pennsylvania line officer for 175 dollars in Swiss gold, that he'd carried all through the war in a money belt around his waist."

"What war was that?" demanded Vaughan.

"The Revolutionary War," said Senator Maitland.

"Hell, that was before my time!" said Colonel Caskey. "And that Dutchman died long ago. He's not the man this gentleman is looking for."

"Well, he's the fellow that laid out this town," said the senator. "And a tarnation poor job he made of it. The town's been held back by not being laid out properly."

The senator was a little deaf. Vaughan's jaw had dropped as though he didn't quite understand.

"I say the town has been held back," shouted the senator.

Colonel Caskey was also slightly deaf and he feared Vaughan wasn't keeping up with the conversation. He leaned closer to the Irishman's ear and said: "The senator says Tannachar ain't goin' ahead the way it oughtta by reason that it wa'ant laid out properly in the first place. . . . By Crim, you'd think the Yankees would be smarter than to let a Dutchman lay out their damned town for 'em and lay it out wrong." He turned to the senator and raised his voice to a high crackling howl. "What's the matter of the damned town? I say, what's the matter of it?"

"Laid out wrong," said the senator. "I say it's laid out wrong by this Dutch engineer, Allzeit."

"What's wrong about it?"

"It's on the wrong creek. The Dutchman's land was on Tanker's Creek two miles downstream. He got set on Tannachar. Result—shoals in front of the town, no wharfage. Steamboats won't stop. Here we are. Nobody can get into the town and, once in, he can't get out. We've got no transportation facilities. Allzeit made a terrible mistake."

"But who's holding the job now?" interposed Vaughan. "Who's borough engineer today?"

"That I could not say," mused the old senator. His bleary eyes wandered to the floor—to Vaughan's black boots, travelled up to his strong, dark face. "You an engineer, Captain?"

"Yes," said Vaughan.

"You going to change the town around to where it ought to be?"

"No," said the Irishman. "I'm just putting a pipeline through."

"Pipeline?" mused the senator. "Pipeline . . . Pipe . . . Pipe . . . Ah!" He smiled suddenly, genially, as though the conversation had taken a happy turn almost without his knowing it. "Must be dry work. You'll take a little refreshment, Captain Vaughan?"

He motioned toward the bar with a slight bow and a wave of a white, long-fingered hand.

But Colonel Caskey was first to accept the invitation.

"With pleasure, Senator Maitland," said Colonel Caskey. "I was telling my young friend as we came across the square of your fine old pre-war stock of Gurgling Starlight of the Purple Meads."

"Laid down in thirty-four," said the senator proudly. "By my father. Kentucky Bourbon, distilled to his order in Louisville and transported to Tannachar by steamboat. It is the hotel brand, Captain Vaughan, and very smooth. I should be pleased to have your opinion of this whiskey. It has been in the charred kegs for a lifetime, and is perfectly mellowed and mature. You won't refuse a glass or two, Captain. I warn you, you will seldom be offered liquor of this character."

"I'm grateful," said Vaughan. "And I don't mind saying my tonsils are dusty. Since you are so kind I will take a short one and then I must be on my way to find that engineer."

VAUGHAN says that the senator took one arm and Colonel Caskey the other. They marched down the bar for a quarter of a mile until they came opposite the barkeep. He was black as ebony and his face, now that they were close to him, showed his great age. His skin was wrinkled and cracked like the bottom of a drained fishpond, but his eyes twinkled and he opened his mouth in a toothless grin that was something to see.

Before they reached the sector of the bar that seemed to be in use, a pot-bellied brown bottle had been set out, with three glass goblets. Vaughan checked his impulse to ask for a siphon. He was glad later that he had not committed the blunder of suggesting the addition of soda water or anything else to the Starlight.

Vaughan deferred to Colonel Caskey, who poured a liberal drink. He filled his own tumbler half full and was sorry the moment he tasted that superlative liquor that he hadn't been bolder.

"How, you may ask, can a man live to my advanced age in this accursed valley of miasma, fog, flood and despair?" remarked the senator, seeming to look through or over Vaughan with his watery eyes, at a vast and distant audience. "Only by filling his veins daily —if not hourly—with this golden, soothing, life-giving fluid. Such is the merit of old whiskey. Raw liquor is a deadly poison, my boy, and I advise you to let it alone. Never touch a drop that hasn't been twenty-five years in the wood. Better wait fifty."

"That seems a long time to wait," said Vaughan.

"But worth it. The result is—my Gurgling Starlight. Have another, sir. It is harmless as the young lamb gamboling in the flowery meadow. Colonel Caskey, another?"

"Delighted, senator," said the colonel. "But I don't know that I'd agree that it is as gentle as a spring lamb. I say, *it'll make you drunk if you drink enough of it!*"

"No . . . no, Colonel. Not the Starlight. It is the essence of serenity, of calm, of sobriety and clarity of vision. It falls upon the sin-sick soul with a touch as tender as a woman's hand."

"I grant you it's marvelous liquor, suh," said the colonel. "But I'm not oblivious of the fact that I walked into the river one night on my way back to the jail after consuming an extra glass of Starlight. A gentle steed, if reasonably ridden, but not to be trifled with."

"Tut, tut, Colonel. You must not frighten your young friend. He looks

like a man who could carry his liquor. Have another glass of the Starlight, Captain Vaughan."

Dusky Vaughan says that the Starlight was as smooth as oil and as fragrant as a June zephyr that has just combed a hedge of eglantine. Never had he drunk anything that so appealed to his palate. As he swallowed each sip he felt as though his tonsils were being brushed with a feather from an angel's wing. To drink such nectar for effect, even to give thought to a possible kick-back, seemed a base misuse of nature's benefits, if it were not positive sacrilege; and Vaughan said he was proud to remember that he hadn't committed that breach of decorum. He says he concentrated all the faculties of his being upon the taste and bouquet of the miraculous beverage and gave not a thought to its possible ultimate effect upon his powers of equilibrium.

The Gurgling Starlight had no effect of an intoxicating nature, Vaughan recalls, until he had finished his third glass, after the arrival of Mr. Pell, the gentleman farmer. He estimates that he had taken about two ounces of Starlight at a drink, making possibly four ounces in all, before Pell came in. A feeling of kindliness toward Senator Maitland, Colonel Caskey and Numa Pompilius, the barkeep, was the only reaction he had observed up to that point. He had given Numa a dollar and had embraced the senator after the second drink. Then a large golden tortoise-shell cat came from the rear of the barroom and leapt up on one of the round tables. The senator introduced the cat as "Josephine," and Vaughan spoke to her politely and cordially. Josy spat on her right fist and licked her forearm unconcernedly. She seemed interested in what was going on at the bar, but aloof from the company.

VAUGHAN is positive that he had taken only two drinks of the Gurgling Starlight when Josephine the cat came in and it was immediately afterward, and before he had taken his third glass, that Mr. Gallatin Pell (or Shell—Senator Maitland's articulation had become slightly liquescent) entered at the side door, the one that gave on the square, and strode toward them down the long barroom. Pell wore a blue frock coat, high black boots, carefully polished, and a broad-brimmed pearl-gray felt hat. His face was smooth-shaven, tanned and good-humored. He had merry brown eyes, well marked but bleachy brows and, when he took off his hat, his hair, which was combed straight back to the wide collar of his blue coat, had the same bleached appearance, as though it had begun as chestnut brown, perhaps, but had faded by reason of exposure to sun and rain, to a rusty yellow. There were even streaks of whitish substance resembling mildew through this otherwise luxuriant, if weather-stained, thatch.

Pell smiled contagiously and humorous wrinkles radiated from the corners of his eyes as he called a cheerful greet- to the members of the Philo Christomatheon Literary Club—which had engaged in no literary activities up to this moment. He bowed to Vaughan and took his place at the bar.

It is necessary to reiterate the point that Vaughan had taken only two drinks before the arrival of Pell, because some unusual developments ensued almost immediately, the recital of which might raise the question whether Dusky was cold sober at the moment. While not cold, he was sober, and Mr. Pell and the cat, each according to his, or her, own ability, *did* conduct themselves in the manner now to be set forth. Later on Dusky took a third and other tumblers of the Starlight, but the new arrivals had begun to carry on *before* he took his third drink. So the strong probability is, Dusky asserts, that the Starlight had nothing to do with what he saw in Tannachar. It was just that the town was a queer, backward sort of place, full of quaint people and cats, and you just had to take them as they were or leave them alone.

The sprightly Mr. Pell had deposited his long drover's whip on a nearby table and taken his position at the bar when Numa Pompilius came round the end of the mahogany with an armful of clover hay and threw it at Mr. Pell's

feet. Pell settled this fragrant mat under his boots and thanked the Negro. Vaughan stared in open astonishment. Senator Maitland, in presenting Pell, had told Vaughan he was a gentleman farmer of the vicinity.

"You must know, Mr. Vaughan," said the farmer. "that I am . . . ah . . . a barn-swallower. My wife, who is waiting for me in the buckboard around the corner and thinks I am in the blacksmith shop at this moment collecting payment for six bushels of turnips, is, I am proud to say, a teetotaller. She will not tolerate liquor in our home at Pell Meadows, God bless her, in any shape, manner or form. . . ." He took a sip of Starlight. A nostalgic humidity bathed his eyeballs. "I remember as though it had been yesterday. . . . Coming back from the County Fair, shortly after we were married. I had a jug of good corn concealed beneath the seat. She found it, with her toe, searched under the seat, lifted the jug, held it at arm's length over the side of the wagon until we caught up with a solid-looking granite boulder, and then dropped it. She smashed the jug in a thousand pieces and baptized the Pell's Creek road with good corn liquor."

"Well, bless my soul," stuttered Senator Maitland, as though he had not heard this amazing recital a thousand times before.

"By th' Eternal!" gasped Colonel Caskey, with rather perfunctory enthusiasm.

"*She* made no comment," added Mr. Pell, laconically. "*I* made no comment. The jug of corn was never referred to between us. . . . A woman of determination, my wife, Betsy! Knows her own mind. Doesn't always speak it, but she knows it."

THERE was a certain Old World suavity and antediluvian griggishness about Mr. Pell. He was evidently a bit of a blade—when he got with the boys in the bar of the Temple of Juno Tavern.

"But what did you *do?*" demanded Senator Maitland, staring at Pell.

"Do? I drove home and put the horses in the barn. Do? . . . *I did without*—for a long, dry week, Senator!"

"Horrible!" ejaculated mine host.

"Torchuh, suh!" agreed Colonel Caskey.

"I parched and pined like a jerk of beef in a smokehouse chimney."

"You did so, I warrant," gasped the Confederate officer.

"And that," nodded the host of the Temple of Juno, understandingly, "was when you became a barn-swallower?"

"Yes, sir. I keep my jug in the haymow, now. When I want a drink I go to the barn—breakfast, lunch or dinner. When my friends come to see me, if *they* want a drink I take *them* to the barn—to a quiet, cheerful, fragrant spot between the mows. I like to have a mat of hay under my heels to cushion the shock when a stiff slug of rye or a jolt of Kentucky corn hits bottom." He turned blandly to Vaughan. "Numa knows my habits and humors me when I drop in here by throwing down a forkful of hay for me to stand on. Don't you, Pluto Scuto?"

"Sho' does, Marse Pell."

"Admirable," exclaimed the senator, as though he could never sufficiently applaud his guest's invention.

"Entirely logical," agreed Vaughan, staring at the hay, which was mouldy and slightly phosphorescent.

"Increases my capacity about two hundred percent," insisted the farmer, demonstrating this facility by tossing a tumbler of Starlight down his throat with no perceptible motion save a slight backward cast of the head and a short graceful sweep of the wrist. In one and the same movement the glass was spun across the shining surface to Numa, who refilled it instantly and placed it before the guest.

No single quiver of the eyelids, no tremulation of the Adam's apple betrayed the downward passage of this double jigger of plush covered T.N.T. As calmly as he would spin a wormy pippin into a cider press, Mr. Gallatin Pell dropped that second slug of liquor into the depths of his being, where it instantly began to do its felicitous, expansive and energizing work.

The planter glanced sideways at Vaughan, under lowered lids. The engineer expressed his amazed admiration by a slight, wry shake of the head.

"A scintillating technique," was his appraisal.

"It is easy with your feet on the hay," insisted Mr. Pell. "Try it yourself . . . double jigger and no heel-taps. . . . Come closer. . . . There. . . . Down the hatch and dodge the hopper. . . . That's it. . . . Liquor that adheres to the tongue and teeth is a total loss, sir. . . . Another glass, Numa. . . . What was I saying, Captain Vaughan?"

"That your wife is a teetotaller!"

"May I be delivered to the Algonquins for torture if she isn't!" asserted Mr. Gallatin Pell. "But she's the finest woman in the world—and the handsomest. . . . Seventeen years, more or less, we've lived together, and never a word, sir. . . . Never a word, Senator Maitland. . . . Not one. . . . Seventeen years, or the like of that—I've sort of lost count—come next Groundhog Day. . . . Yes, sir, we were married on the second day of February 18 and 22."

"When?" asked Vaughan.

"1822."

"I . . . I thought you said 1822," gasped Vaughan.

AFTER the third drink, Vaughan says, the Starlight began to take hold in a definite and pervasive fashion. It tingled warmly through his body from his eyebrows to his toes. He was not drunk, nor even headed for a bender, he says. Vaughan hopes he has been drunk often enough to recognize the early stages of alcoholic inebriation. None of the squalid nor debasing sensations or conditions associated with such reprehensible indulgence were present in this instance.

It is true that weariness and care for the sordid concerns of the Portmarine Pipeline Company fell from him like an outworn suit of blue flannel pajamas with a broken belt ribbon, and he seemed to rise triumphantly, like a golden phoenix, or a peacock with a purple tail, from the ashes of his late discouragement; but that is not being swacked, as Dusky views the experience. It is being sublimated.

Along with this feeling of exhilaration and exaltation came a pleasant consciousness of an expansion, an enrichment or, one might call it, a fructification amid his surroundings. A row of six bottles appeared on the bar, for example, and Senator Maitland procured three heads. Josephine kittened and equipped each of a dozen tables with her progeny. Mr. Pell's slug-cushion became a harvest field, and the Confederate Army deployed down the barroom with Colonel Caskey at their head, while a stalwart group of gentlemen farmers hooked their elbows over the edge of the bar that stretched off into infinity and pledged him benignly in yet another glass of Senator Maitland's ambrosial corn. And he now began to hear the steamboat bells—numerous bells—chiming sweetly from the far sweet vales—probably some of them from below Steubenville.

While all of this added to his enjoyment of the occasion and his pleasure in the unusual but delightful personalities among whom he had been so casually and surprisingly precipitated, in the course of business, it by no means stilled that inward voice and call to duty which has ever been the guiding principle of Vaughan's career. This call rang now, loudly and distinctly, in the belfry of his being, above the musical chiming of the seductive steamboat carillon. . . . Vaughan determined to leave at once. He felt it would be wise to get into the cooler outer air.

"I trust I shall not give offense, Senator, if I take my departure," he said. "Business, you know, before pleasure."

He realized that in his desire to be courteous, he was being a little pompous; but it seemed to be that or cry on the senator's shoulder. There was no convenient middle course.

The senator's reply was calm and slow. His voice had sunk an octave.

"The evening is yet young," affirmed Mine Host, complacently, "and so are you. So are we all, for the matter of that."

"My employers are most insistent that I lay this pipeline up to the lake," Vaughan replied. "They wish me to hurry the job along. They won't take no for an answer. Therefore, I must depart. I have enjoyed your company, gentle-

men. The memory of your excellent liquor, Senator, dear as remembered kisses after death, or the echo of transcendent melodies in the soul, will remain forever enshrined in my heart."

Vaughan says that he found himself becoming quite poetic under the influence of the Starlight and the stimulating appreciation of a large audience of Confederate veterans, cats and senators, not to mention the convention of gentleman farmers and the phalanx of black barkeeps that had now appeared behind the mile of mahogany bar, but it seemed to him altogether fitting that he should adopt this highfalutin' form of language.

The senator was fatherly, complacent, understanding.

"If you must, you must," he sighed. "We are loath to see you go, Captain." He turned to the colonel and raised his voice to a shout. "I'm telling Captain Vaughan that we hate like hell to see him go."

"Yes . . . suh. . . . That we do, suh," agreed the Colonel. "But if he has work to do, he'd best be on his way while he is still sober."

"What do you mean, sober?" demanded Josephine, the cat.

THIS, Vaughan says, is the first time the cat spoke. He'd had three drinks, but, aside from the slight dizziness mentioned above and attributable to the amazing potency of the old Bourbon liquor, he was still reasonably sober. A slight attack of multiple vision does not signify inebriation, as Vaughan views the experience. He often sees double or even triple when he hasn't had a drop for days. But, of course, it is one thing to meet a senator with three heads and something else again to have a hotel cat break into the conversation casually, in the midst of her personal ablutions.

Vaughan was astounded to an extreme degree to have Josephine enter the conversation. He felt that he must be mistaken and he decided to pay no attention to her reprehensible question. But it became evident immediately that it was no hallucination, that the cat had passed a remark and that it had been noted by the others, for the senator made a reply. In fact he scolded her for breaking into the colloquy with her impertinent query.

"Josephine," said Senator Maitland, severely, "be silent."

But the cat would not hold her peace. "He's blinko right now," said the sleek animal, continuing to lick her wrist.

"Blinko, blinko," chanted all the other cats in unison, making a sort of song of it.

"Nonsense," roared the senator. "Josephine, tell your progeny to be quiet."

"Tell 'em yourself," said Josephine impudently.

The senator became angry as Vaughan burst into an appreciative guffaw. Vaughan says the cats really tickled him. But the senator turned and spoke to Numa Pompilius.

"Take the cat and put her in the cistern, boy," he said and then turned to Colonel Caskey. "I'm telling him to put Josephine in the cistern," he bellowed.

"Quite regular, suh," agreed the Colonel. "She's your cat, suh. A little touch o' the blacksnake whip would do her a world of good."

"Gentlemen . . . gentlemen, I beg you to do nothing of the sort," protested Vaughan. "I enjoy the song. Don't put her in the cistern. Let her sing . . . and we'll all join in."

So they did sing. The senator had a good baritone voice. Colonel Caskey and Mr. Gallatin Pell sang tenor and bass, while Numa Pompilius added to the racket by making castanets out of ten small whiskey glasses. He fitted the glasses over the ends of his fingers and jingled them in the air while he clogged up and down, first behind the bar and then upon it, like an animated crystal chandelier. And all the other barkeeps did the same.

VAUGHAN continued to express his appreciation of the hospitality that had been shown him and his regret at being obliged to return to his construction gang, and the senator continued to voice his sorrow that it should be necessary for their new acquaintance to take his leave. He complimented Vaughan upon his wholly disinterested advocacy

of the cause of the irrepressible Josephine —while Josy continued to chant and sing. She and her group rendered many ditties which Vaughan thought charming at the time, but could not remember thereafter.

This had been going on for quite some time when the senator suddenly said: "Gentlemen, I'm determined to do it." He struck a pose, with his right hand in his frilly shirt front.

"Do what?" said the colonel.

"I'm determined to open the last bottle of the Monongahela Morningglow, put down in charred barrels by my grandfather, General Maitland, who fit in the Revolutionary War and kept a tavern in Westmoreland County afterward. He made this liquor himself and hid forty barrels of it in a cave on Chartier's Creek, where it was discovered and dug up, long ago, by my father. Red Rebellion, my father called it. Never again will you have an opportunity to set your teeth in the cork of such a bottle."

Senator Maitland paused to stare gravely at the Confederate officer in his baggy gray coat. He turned again to Vaughan.

"I have never offered this golden treasure to my friend, Colonel Caskey, because he was at one time a rebel in arms against our beloved Union."

"I don't see why you should have discriminated against me, suh," expostulated the Confederate. "I wa'nt doin' anything that your granddaddy didn't do in 1790."

"Silence, sir," roared the senator. "My ancestor fought for his whiskey—not for the retention of the iniquitous institution of human slavery."

"Suh, the withdrawal of the Confederated States of the American Union was a political movement—the Whiskey Rebellion was a brawl and your granddaddy was. . . ."

"Sirrah!"

"Suh!"

"You forget yourself, Rebel."

"Senator Maitland, suh, I have the honor to tell you, suh, that you ah a condemned seven-button, diamond-back Yankee. . . ."

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," interposed Vaughan. "You have totally forgotten one thing . . . The Civil War is over. Richmond has fallen."

Colonel Caskey gasped.

In a whisper of awe the senator said: "We had heard rumors. Nothing was certain. We have so little communication with the outside world. Shallow water in front of the city wharf and the haunted valley behind us! We're cut off. But are you sure? . . . Is it really all over?"

"Lee surrendered at Appomattox Court House to General Grant . . . about seventy-five years ago."

"Alas . . . alas," wheezed Colonel Caskey.

"Our beloved Union is saved?" exclaimed the senator joyously.

"Yes . . . and I must get back to work," said Vaughan bringing his fist down with determination upon the bar.

HE says none of these grotesque anachronisms and casual references to impossibly remote dates seemed strange or incredible at the time.

"Not yet . . . not yet. You must drink a toast to our beloved Union in a goblet of this Monongahela Morningglow. And you, too, Colonel Caskey, and Mr. Pell, my old friends. The Rebellion is over. Peace returns. Let us clasp hands once more as brothers and drink to our glorious galaxy of sovereign states. Numa, set forth the Morningglow. . . . What do you say, Colonel?"

"That I am crushed by the news, suh, as I am overwhelmed by your generosity."

"Assuage your grief with a glass of this universal solvent of human sorrow."

"Baloney," said Josephine.

"Carrie Nation, you are speaking out of turn," admonished Vaughan with a smile.

"Who is she?" demanded the senator.

"I am too young to know," said Vaughan.

"I'm a little afraid of that stuff," wept Colonel Caskey. "I mean the Morningglow."

"Harmless as milk," said Senator Maitland, simply.

"If it's been evaporating in a cask for a hundred and forty years it must be

pretty highly concentrated by this time," Vaughan said.

"Mild as maple sap," said Pell.

"Brewed in rebellion—distilled in deviltry," muttered Colonel Caskey.

"Sirrah?"

"Suh?"

"Gentlemen," pleaded Vaughan. "Let us have peace."

Numa set out the roughest looking green bubble-glass bottle Vaughan had ever seen—and he'd been something of an old-glass collector at one time. It was a three-cornered pinch bottle of irregular shape with a corn-cob stoppel completely swathed in cobwebs.

"Gentlemen," said the senator with a bow. "I make you free of the Morningglow of Monongahela—the ancient residue of charity and truth."

"Hear . . . hear," said Vaughan. "You go first, Colonel."

Peace seemed all at once to be restored.

They poured three generous drinks.

Vaughan said he took a liberal portion.

"To our beloved Union," said the Senator.

Colonel Caskey shuddered as with an ague, frowned fiercely at his glass as though it were full of vitriol. A moment later the solace and appeasement of the ancient liquor reached his pinched and purple nostrils. He sighed from his bootsoles, dashed a tear from the end of his h o o k e d beak—and became re-constructed!

VAUGHAN declares that he never knew when the liquor went down his throat. He did not swallow it, he is sure. It may have passed up his nostrils and entered his being in the guise of an imponderable ethereal perfume. At least it was not a mere liquid to trickle down a mundane gullet—the Morningglow wasn't.

He had the feeling that his palate had been ineffably complimented. That was all. His tonsils experienced a sensation of indescribable beatification. He felt the sudden necessity of sitting down at one of the tables and the other three men joined him there immediately to finish their drinks. They chanced to pick the table that Josephine was sitting on and Vaughan says she gave him a strange look.

"Don't say I didn't warn you," said Josephine.

"You are a frivolous and foolish feline," said Vaughan. "Sing something." He has frequently noticed that liquor makes him alliterative.

The cat sang a few stanzas of "Oh that we two were Maying" which Vaughan thinks may have put him to sleep. He does not know how long he was asleep, but he was awakened by gunfire.

He leaped out of his chair. Senator Maitland and Colonel Caskey were gone. That is, they were gone from the table. Vaughan saw them instantly standing one at each end of the long bar, each with a smoking pistol in his hand.

Mr. Pell was halfway between them and seemingly in their line of fire. He had a blue silk handkerchief which he waved up and down as a signal to discharge and Vaughan noticed two bullet holes in his hat. At least one exchange had occurred—and glass was still raining down from a chandelier, in front, and a mirror at the rear. Both men were shooting high.

Each was proceeding grimly to reload, with powder and ball and a short ramrod.

Vaughan rushed out of the bar to obtain help. He feared the colonel and the senator would kill each other—and he says the prospect filled him with terrible alarm. It all seemed so futile—so long after Appomattox.

"I told you so," called Josephine.

Vaughan says he had an invincible impulse to go back, seize one of the loaded pistols from the senator's hand and despatch the cat then and there. He hated her. He noticed with pleasure that her children were gone. They disappeared when she followed him into the hall.

"Stay out of that parlor if you know what's good for you," bawled the cat, in the corridor.

Vaughan was making for the door opposite. He shouted back over his shoulder, "Pipe down, parsnip!"

He crossed the hall. He does not know why he did this. He might have turned down the hall in search of the servants, but he didn't. Possibly Josephine had put the idea into his mind. He felt a

spirit of stubborn rebellion against all restriction and opposition rising up within his breast.

Vaughan pushed open a wide white-panelled door with glass knobs and entered the parlor of the Temple of Juno Tavern.

A beautiful dark girl in an evening dress of the eighties stood under a brilliant glass chandelier.

Vaughan says that just as he went through the door into the parlor he heard Josephine behind him and she said: "How about getting back to work on that pipeline!"

"What would be wrong with your attending to your kittens?" was his rejoiner.

VAUGHAN was fully conscious that Josephine had given him good advice. However, he told her to pipe down again, more harshly than before, and to quit following him around like a gas bill or a date with the dentist.

The dark girl in the parlor began to pout at Vaughan the moment he came into the room. She was dressed out of Godey's Lady's Book, in a lavender dress that would have covered a tennis court. It was decorated with circular ruffles like waves of pink icing on a conical birthday cake. She had a miraculously small waist. Her arms and shoulders were bare and she had black bangs and dark eyes with long lashes which popped up to surprising altitudes when she looked at him. She seemed a little under medium height, but then Vaughan himself was a six-footer. So she had to pop her lashes up that way if she expected to see anything above his Adam's apple, which apparently, she did. Vaughan said she had a mouth made for pouting, and other things.

The girl came toward him and pleaded: "Oh, take me away."

"Away where?" said Vaughan.

"Away from Tannachar."

"What's wrong with Tannachar?" he asked sternly.

"It's a place of tyranny and death," she screamed. "And my father rules me with a rod of iron."

"Who is your father?"

"Senator Maitland. He owns this hotel. I'm Maggie Maitland."

"He doesn't look like such a bad fellow to me."

"He's the best man in the world, except that he wants me to marry Colonel Caskey when the war is over."

"I can't believe it. The colonel is five times your age if he's a day."

"It's kind of you to say so," she said, dropping those lashes over him like one of those nets Roman gladiators used to fling over an enemy. "As a matter of fact . . . I . . . I'm over eighteen."

"You astound me," Vaughan replied.

"It's a secret," she whispered. "Long ago I found the hidden bin in the south cellar, where the Monongahela Morningglow is kept. Father must never know this. I drank all but three bottles of it, surreptitiously, and I used some of it as hair tonic, too. Do you admire my hair?"

"It's glorious. The Morningglow must be great stuff," he said.

"It is. Unfortunately there is very little of it left."

"You'll have to fall back on the Gurgling Starlight of the Purple Meads."

"I suppose so. Then I shall age rapidly. Oh, dear."

Vaughan felt that her attitude wasn't quite what it should be and he moralized: "One shouldn't become so dependent upon alcohol."

"Alcohol?" she exclaimed, pulling up the curtains and giving him both turrets. "There is no alcohol in the Morningglow."

"Well, what gives it such a wallop?"

"Magic," she said, softly, and came a step closer. "You will save me, won't you?"

It seemed that she wanted to be saved.

Vaughan asserts that without knowing very well what he was about he put his arms around the girl and drew her close to him. She put up her face, pouting and said again: "Save me . . ."

So he had to save her, he said. He kissed her two or three times; and each time he did it he found himself hooked with the feeling that he'd have to go back for another.

So he drew her yet closer until at last she said: "Oh, I must breathe, sir."

VAUGHAN said he never knew but one girl who could do without breathing for more than a few minutes at a time. and she was connected in his mind with an unhappy experience in Tierra del Fuego, where he was installing a gold dredge at the time, and about which he preferred not to talk. He felt it sufficient to say that, when you run across a woman who can hold her breath for ten minutes, it is time to go slow. Maggie Maitland was perfectly normal, healthy and sane and there was nothing weird about her—not in the smallest degree.

"There, that's better," gasped the girl. "Now I've got my breath again. But you haven't told me your . . . . our name."

"Vaughan," he said. "Dusky Vaughan. I was christened Dunscomb, but you may call me Dusky. I'm an engineer, Maggie."

"Maggie Vaughan . . . Mrs. Dusky Vaughan . . . It sounds wonderful."

Her face clouded prettily.

"Promise to be kind to me," she pleaded. "And that you'll never kick me around. My heart misgives me you may be a terrible man in your cups."

"I?" said Vaughan. "Lady, I never struck a woman with my clenched fist . . . never in my life ma'am . . . drunk or sober. And you'll never see me any drunker, ma'am, than I am at this instant."

"I'm glad of that," she said.

"And so am I," said Josephine.

Vaughan had forgotten this miserable cat. Now he turned and there she was with her tail in the air, stiff as a musket.

"Listen, you," said Vaughan, angrily. "I wish you'd go away and let me alone. You mind your business and I'll mind mine."

"Is that a promise?" demanded Josephine.

"It is."

"Well, then, how about getting back to the pipeline?"

"What pipeline?" Vaughan said.

Vaughan said that when the cat reminded him he ought to get back to his job he couldn't remember what it was he'd been doing up to an hour before. And that wasn't due to the stuff he'd been drinking, either. It was due to Maggie Maitland's long lashes and her . . . well . . . it wasn't the Morningglow.

He said to Maggie: "Sweetheart, I'm getting damned tired of your cat."

"Run away, Josy," said Maggie Maitland; and then, to Dusky, "Don't pay any attention . . . She's a privileged character . . . It's because she's very old and she'd been here so long she feels she can do and say about what she pleases. She was named for the Empress, of course."

"What Empress?" said Vaughan, with an odd feeling that he was about to hear something that would upset him.

"Napoleon's first Empress," she said. "It was long before my time . . . But then Josephine is a very old cat . . . old and wise."

"Have you any idea how old?" Vaughan asked.

"No, I haven't," said Maggie Maitland. "But she goes back pretty far . . . You see she found her way into the south cellar where the Morningglow was kept. There was some leakage and while just a kitten she made a practice of lapping up the drip from the casks."

"Ah," said Vaughan. "Keep away from me, Josephine . . . I don't like the look in your eye." And to Maggie, "And now, if I'm to save you, I suppose we'd better find some sort of conveyance."

"There is a carriage in the stable," said Maggie. "It hasn't been used for a long time. No doubt it is dusty and out of repair."

"Probably," agreed Vaughan.

"The horses died a long time ago."

"They had no access to the Gurgling Starlight, I suppose."

"Indeed they did not. They were very temperate—except in the matter of green apples."

"Never mind that," Vaughan said. "Come along now and we'll see if we can manage somehow."

"Carry me over the threshold," Maggie insisted.

"Let her walk," said Josephine.

"I'll be glad to see the last of you," said the girl angrily to her pet.

"I don't doubt it," said the cat.

VAUGHAN says he kissed Maggie Maitland again and, lifting her in his arms, carried her into the hall.

It was his intention to leave by the wide front door, without returning to the bar and without again speaking to Senator Maitland or his guests. But this wise precaution was thwarted by Josephine, who marched into the bar and said in a shrill voice: "The wench is away with that black-browed Irishman. Wha'd I tell you? There can't a man put his nose around the corner but she's after him hammer and tongs. I don't like his looks myself. Ten to one he's got seven more wives up and down the river. He looks like a Louisville leaper to me."

"What's that you tell me?" roared Senator Maitland.

"What say?" cackled Colonel Caskey.

"You heard me," snarled Josephine.

"Who dares lay hands upon my daughter, Maggie?" shouted the senator thickly.

"The Irishman—but they cooked it up between them. They be to skip the country. They're going out the front door, now! They'd be gone if the door hadn't swelled with the damp and the mildew until it can't be opened."

"Stop," cried the senator.

"Stay, sirrah," called the colonel.

Gentleman Farmer Pell said nothing to Vaughan, but he called upon Numa Pompilius for another slug of the Monongahela Morningglow, his elbows hooked resolutely on the edge of the bar and his booted legs still planted firmly in his hay shock-absorber.

Vaughan stepped into the bar and faced the senator and his guests.

"What's all this hubbub and commotion?" demanded the senator.

Maggie at this point stepped forward and took the burden of the argument upon her own handsome shoulders.

"What this town needs is more hubbub," said Maggie. "It means, Father, that I'm on my way."

"You signify you are going with this stranger—this pipeline engineer?" sputtered the senator.

"I am. I . . . oh, father, I love him so," pleaded the girl.

"Without first seeing his pipeline?" put in Colonel Caskey.

"I don't care about his pipeline," said Maggie. "It's him I love."

"It shan't be. I'll call him out," sputtered the colonel.

The senator gasped. "Well, God bless my soul."

"And mine," echoed Farmer Pell.

"What shall I do?" mumbled the senator. After a few moments of bewildered head shaking he answered his own question.

"I'll go with you," he wheezed.

"If you do go along with them," said Colonel Caskey, "I'm right at your heels. I've got no more business in Tannachar, anyhow."

"By Criminy," gurgled Farmer Pell. "You won't leave Betsy and me behind. Numa . . . give me that bottle."

"Well, carry me back to ol' Virginny," gasped Josephine—astounded at the hegira that had started.

"If you-all are goin' traipsin' away from old Tannachar I can tell you one thing. I'm not going to be left behind," said Numa.

"Ner me," squawked Josephine. "And, anyhow, there ought to be somebody in this expedition that will stay sober, kind of."

"You never said a truer word, parsnip," said Vaughan.

Vaughan states that he then proceeded the length of the bar, with his bride on his arm and out the side door into the gloomy square.

The happy couple were not permitted to depart alone.

VAUGHAN says that what happened now was something that a person could hardly believe, unless he had seen it with his own two eyes.

The entire population of Tannachar decided to leave with him and Maggie Maitland. It seemed that they all set a lot of store by Maggie. The old senator doted on her and Josephine the cat followed her around like a dog. There wasn't any question but that Tannachar had gone back—and it hadn't been a progressive town in the first place. Maggie Maitland, who seemed to have a lot

of get-up-and-git, said that anybody who stayed in a stick-in-the-mud river port like Tannachar would never amount to anything and she was going to get out of the town while she could. They all agreed sadly that she was probably right. The fact was they had all been cooped up in Tannachar for so long that they were tired of the place. Being cut off from communication with the outside world by the sandbars in the river in front of the town and the high barren hills behind, with only one valley, for egress, and it blocked by an Indian burial mound of the Delaware tribe, containing in particular one cantankerous old copper-snake by the name of Tannacharison, the town had made no advancement.

They marched across the little square toward the brick jail, where Colonel Caskey called a halt to make sure he'd locked the outside gate of the hoosegow at the rear. He hung the big brass key on a spike in the brick wall, feeling that he wouldn't need it any more. Then the procession started up Center Street toward the meadows and Tannachar Gorge, Josephine marching in front. Josephine, Vaughan said, was the only cat he ever knew that had a phosphorescent tail, which was, without doubt the metabolic effect of the rare old liquor with which she was saturated.

Behind Josephine came Dusky and his bride-to-be, then Senator Maitland, Colonel Caskey and Numa Pompilius. Farmer Gallatin Pell and his wife, a shriveled little woman in a poke bonnet, brought up the rear in a buckboard, behind a team of motheaten nags with a vicious, hang-dog manner and green eyes the size of spittoons. Vaughan never saw such an eye in a horse, but he didn't have time to worry about it then. He didn't expect to ride in Pell's wagon anyhow.

However, he says he noticed that, when Pell went to untie the horses from the hitching rail in the square, the tail of his, Pell's coat was bulging and sagging with the pinch bottle of Morning-glow he'd chiseled off the bar at the Temple of Juno. He couldn't tell whether Mrs. Pell noticed it or not, but she was giving Pell hell for spending so much time in the hotel, when he'd said he was going around to the blacksmith shop; but, she added, she never expected him to get to a smithy if there was a speakeasy around, and that she'd had a good mind to drive off and leave him. She'd had to put up with his drinking and carousing with low company at the Temple of Juno long enough. . . .

Mrs. Pell, Vaughan says, presented the appearance of a woman in her late nineties. She was small and wrinkled, like a cabbage leaf, and she had a high, cackling voice. She buzzed into Pell, who looked about a third her age, like a snake feeder coming across the creek. Vaughan judged she had never drunk any of the Gurgling Starlight and she wasn't as well preserved as Pell himself, who was practically embalmed.

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Upon later consideration, however, Vaughan says he came to the realization that she must have been at least a hundred and thirty-odd, since she was married in 1822; and, in that case, she was a mighty well-preserved hundred and thirty. Vaughan says she'd have passed for a hundred and fifteen anywhere. So, despite the fact that she never drank herself, her mere association with Gallatin Pell, who was well saturated with that potent pickling fluid, had given her several extra decades.

THE procession went up Main Street and turned at the small brick schoolhouse to cross the mysterious meadows toward the Indian burial ground at the foot of the gorge.

A deathly silence reigned over the scene as they approached the burial mound, broken only by the creaking of an axle under Mr. Pell's buckboard and slight squawks from Josephine.

With Maggie Maitland on his arm he climbed up on the mound, followed by Senator Maitland, Colonel Caskey and Numa Pompilius—the Pells having halted their buggy at the foot of the slope to engage in an altercation over something that Mrs. Pell had found in Pell's tail pocket.

When Josephine was on the middle of the mound came the earthquake, as he had feared it would. Old Tannacharison went on another rampage.

Josephine turned a double back flip and scampered back into the meadow.

The first temblor was followed by another of such violence that the little party of refugees were first hurled into the air and then rolled down the slope in a screeching tangle, the sound effects being supplied mainly by Maggie Maitland and Josephine. That mound heaved and bucked like a Texas steer.

Dusky picked himself up and tried again. He was hurled back. He returned to the fray, but was tossed twenty feet in the air by another seismic disturbance and found himself rolled under the Pell's buckboard.

As he picked himself up once more he saw his late companions, including Farmer Gallatin Pell and Josephine, streaking it back across the meadow toward the town. Only Mrs. Pell remained.

She didn't see him as he crawled from beneath the buckboard.

She was standing in the conveyance and she had the pinch bottle in her hand. She'd found Pell's treasure, his part of a quart of Monongahela Morningglow, and had snitched it from his coattail pocket as he leaped from the buckboard.

At this instant the burial mound was writhing and heaving like a circus tent blown down on a herd of performing elephants. It was twenty times worse than before.

"Belay there, you black hearted varmints," she screeched, "or I'll give you something to keep you quiet."

Vaughan was unable to account for this somewhat nautical phrase. But that was just what Mrs. Pell said.

With that she hurled the bottle toward the mound. It struck a boulder and drenched old Chief Tannacharison and all his tribe in Monongahela Morningglow.

"And I hope it burns your heathen gizzards out," she howled vindictively.

Then Mrs. Pell grabbed the lines and whipped up her big-eyed nags after her husband and the other fugitive citizens of this backward burg, in the direction of the old schoolhouse and the main street of Tannachar.

When Vaughan turned again to the burial mound he was astounded. It was as quiet as a church. You could have brushed him down with a buckwheat straw.

He climbed over the mound without difficulty, now, and proceeded up the deserted valley. One whiff of the Morningglow had put old Tannachar and all his tribe asleep again for another hundred and fifty years.

"DO you get the angle?" inquired Vaughan, sipping his whiskey. "The angle is that the trouble was all in Tulsa—and not in Tannachar at all. The engineering crew had never surveyed that line through Tannachar—but they had mapped it just the same. That was why we couldn't find any stakes. Of course the survey should have crossed the river at Tankersport. I knew that the minute Senator Maitland mentioned the fact that Allzeit's land was on Tanker's Creek and not on Tannachar."

"That made it perfectly obvious," I agreed.

"Old Coppernose Tannacharison had a perfectly legitimate beef at being disturbed. It's no wonder he reared up."

"None whatever."

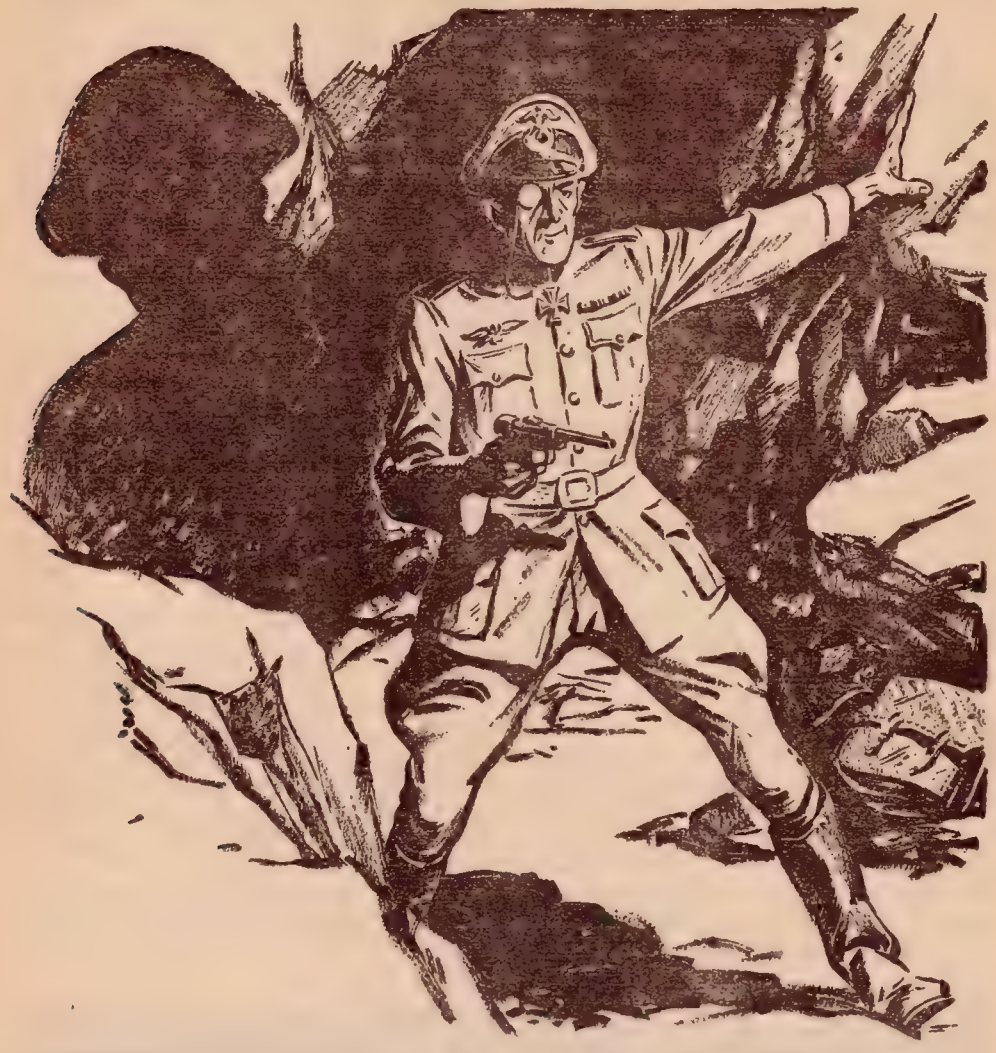
"That's what I told Fitzgerald when I got back to the field office. I told him to get his traps out of Tannachar Creek and run his line across the river at Tankersport. Tulsa never forgave me for that. C. J. Jugsmith claimed I got off the survey. He wired me that I had taken unwarrantable liberties with the chart and caused Portmarine great loss and confusion. 'Chart, your grandmother!' I telegraphed back. Then he fired me. He was an ignorant old curmudgeon."

Vaughan looked down his highball tumbler with one eye. He saw nothing but ice.

"Indians," said Vaughan, more softly. "Lemme tell you something, oldtimer. In comparison with some of the varmints that are on the rampage hither and yon today, Indians were nice people. And I don't mean Jugsmith. Jugsmith's neither here nor there."

Vaughan was bitter. He seemed lost in melancholy reflections . . . I stole quietly away.

A PRETTY SMART



STAVROS felt their stares on his back as hot as the hot Cretan sun. He was not a sensitive man, Stavros, but as the German strode toward the quarry, gradually he had become aware of his neighbors' contempt. He once had boasted what he would do to the first German who dared approach. And now a German was here.

Puffs of yellow dust curled from the German's boots and his arms swung purposefully, as though propelling him. He might, Stavros hoped, pass without slowing. In that case, Alexander Stavros might not have to pay the price for shooting off his mouth.

A voice snorted, "Ha!"

Stavros recognized Baltazes, and his ear-rims reddened. It was Baltazes, the woodcarver; Baltazes with his talk of guerrillas. Stavros wanted to beat him, but all the women and children of the village were looking on.

Heat waves shimmered off the pit below, distorting its cavities into a blur, like caves seen under water. The sky was a soft blue and the mountains met it with savage grandeur, but the German came on, unheedful of heat and scenery alike. Yet Stavros knew from experience. A rucksack hung over the German's shoulder, above his pistol hol-

GREEK

By
HAL G. EVARTS

ILLUSTRATED
BY
CHARLES DYE

The German was mad! He might be the best navigator in the world, but he did not know the Labyrinth. Then Stavros saw the gun in his hand and heard him saying, "Drop your torch, please."

ster. This German had come to do the Labyrinth.

"A tourist," someone cackled, and a titter ran through the group.

It was the crone, Nika. She was to blame also. Nika and Baltazes together had shamed him into this, and he gave her a scowl. But because there was no face-saving expedient he shuffled down the hill.

The German had stopped when Stavros got within speaking distance. He stopped too, waiting to be noticed, but after the German had ignored him for some time Stavros touched his cap and said, "*Guten Tag, mein Herr.*"

He employed the same servile tone he would have employed for "*Bon jour, monsieur,*" or "Good-day, sir," or any of the half dozen other language scraps he had acquired as part of his stock in trade, but his throat was tight. He wondered if the watching villagers guessed at his fear, or if the German guessed. If the German had the slightest suspicion, Stavros knew he would be shot.

The German turned slowly, his shadow falling across that of Stavros, and examined him with an air of impersonal curiosity, as an archaeologist might examine some inferior pottery. He wore the uniform of a *Luftwaffe* lieutenant, and he was so characteristic of all the others Stavros had seen that he seemed exaggerated. He had an athlete's slim carriage, a narrow face that suggested over-training, and a watchful arrogance around the eyes.

When Stavros could stand his inspection no longer, he blurted, "I am the guide."

"Guide?" The German's face and voice were expressionless, but he managed to convey scorn.

Stavros colored. "The official guide. My father also was guide—" He would have babbled more in his confusion, but the German shook his head negatively and moved on to the edge of the quarry.

Stavros waited, one part of his mind bitterly at work picturing Baltazes and Nika and the others. If he had not been full of *uzo* and patriotic nonsense one evening this would never have happened.

THEY had been listening to the rattle of machine-gun fire and the crump of bombs up the island where General Mandakas and his Greeks and *Inglisi* still held out against the Germans and Italians, when Baltazes had exclaimed, "If I were a whole man again!"

Baltazes had lost a leg at Kavalla in 1916, which event he had recounted at least once every day since. Then Nika hissed, "If I were half a man!"

Stavros had lowered his eyes. Nika's six sons and eleven grandsons were fighting with Mandakas. One by one they had slipped away to join him—the boys, the youths, the men, the graybeards—until only crippled Baltazes and himself were left.

"Someone must remain," he mumbled.

Half the village derived their income from the Labyrinth. Baltazes, for instance, carved effigies of St. Titus for visitors. Nika sold olives. Someone must look after it, so that when the war ended they all would have the means to live again. Stavros considered this his duty.

"A woman's job," Baltazes snapped.

Stavros drained his glass. He was just drunk enough to be truculent. "Who says I'm afraid?"

As soon as the words were out he realized that no one had accused him, and he felt foolish, but the momentum of his emotion swept him along. He crashed his fist on the table. "I'll fix the Boches!" he shouted.

"You!" Nika jeered. "What can you do?"

In sudden sobriety he searched the ring of faces, and was surprised by what he found. They were hostile faces, judging him. What could he do? What could a tourist guide do to a German soldier? Then, like a vision, the great idea had struck him.

Rising to his feet unsteadily, he had roared, "Why, the first Boche who comes I will lead into the heart of the Labyrinth and leave him to die!"

As he stood behind the German he remembered with sickening apprehension how clever he had thought himself. The Germans were too busy fighting; they had no interest in antiquities; they would never come here. And thus word of

Alexander Stavros' vow had spread. For a while even his enemies had accorded him grudging respect.

THE German shaded his eyes, peering down. The excavation was more than a hundred meters deep, and slabs had been cut from the floor in a complex pattern, leaving an exposed maze of passages, chambers, runways and giant cracks. These merged and disappeared in a series of horizontal shafts drilled into the cliff, where the real Labyrinth began.

The German descended a ramp. At the mouth of the main tunnel he paused. "Water in there?" he asked in good Greek.

Stavros thought quickly. "Much. It is dangerous."

"Dangerous." The German laughed.

This Stavros was a dumpy little man, moon-faced and partially bald. He had the sly knowing air common to his profession, but there was a certain naiveté in his large and liquid eyes. The German's lips twitched. He spun around and plunged inside.

Stavros hesitated. He hesitated until the German was nearly out of sight. Then he grabbed one of the pitch torches he had stored before the invasion and rushed to overtake him. He had no notion what to do next, but he could not just stand there.

The German had taken a flashlight from his bag and shot a beam along the walls. A square-hewn cavern tilted downward beyond its range. Beads of moisture glistened in crevices, and the spatter of drops grew more frequent. Imperceptibly the patch of daylight shrunk to a point, then winked out, and the stale dank air of underground closed around them.

The German walked with a rapid leggy gait, looking up only to avoid some *cul de sac* or squirm through an opening. He did not seem to care where he was going, which astonished Stavros, because ordinary sightseers cared a great deal. Ordinary sightsteers he knew how to manage. But this German was not ordinary.

Within a few minutes Stavros saw how simple it would be. The German had accepted him, as a man tolerates a strange dog at his heels. When he vanished around the next bend or two Stavros could light his torch and make his own way back to the entrance. He doubted if the German could find his way back even now. But to be safe he would let him work in deeper still.

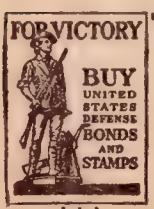
They passed the farthest point where travelers ventured to carve their initials, or smoke the roof with candles, and penetrated that section dug out by slaves before the time of Christ. The galleries had narrowed so they could no longer walk erect. Brackish water oozed down the sides, forming pools of scum. Even the scuff of their sole leather sounded dead and unwholesome with age.

Stavros' heart quickened. Long before the German missed him he would be on his way out. The thought of a triumphant return to his village steadied his nerve.

Then, abruptly, the German halted. There was a flicker of sardonic amusement in his eyes. "I don't require a guide," he said.

The German was watching him so intently that Stavros felt a stab of alarm, and he abused himself for delaying. The German must be got on the move again.

"Perhaps the lieutenant wishes to see the Roman excavations," he suggested, "or the early Minoan, by which we re-



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trace the Labyrinth's chronological history—"

HE RAN on in his stilted, memorized phrases while the German eased from his straps and set down the rucksack. The German unfastened a pocket and drew out an aluminum container. Squatting, he balanced the flashlight between his knees so that it shone on Stavros. Then he poured a brownish substance into his palm and licked it, his eyes never leaving Stavros' face.

When he finished he wiped his mouth. Stavros remembered that he was hungry too. Hungry as well as tired. But the German appeared in no hurry to depart.

"Listen, guide," he interrupted, "I navigate bombers."

Stavros forced a smile.

Without knowing why, he was afraid in a way he had not been afraid before.

"I fly them blind through fog, through blizzards, through mountains at night. Just with my instruments. That is why I laugh at your talk of getting lost."

Stavros did not understand, but he sensed that some comment was expected. "Ah," he said.

"I have iron rations for several days. I have an extra flash. This is a test. A little problem in navigation. That is how we train ourselves in the New Germany."

Stavros stared. The man was mad! He might be the best navigator in all the world, but he did not know the Labyrinth. Straightened out, the Labyrinth would stretch around the world twice. Stavros had heard the Germans were efficient, but he could not believe they were all like this one.

Then he saw the gun in the German's hand, and heard him saying, "Drop your torch, please."

For a second Stavros was dazzled by the light's brightness. The German advanced a step. Stavros' fingers relaxed and the pitch wood slid to the ground. The German kicked it away.

"Now your matches."

Stavros blinked. Without matches he would be helpless. He would be at the German's mercy.

Stavros found somehow that he was surprised the German should do this to him.

The German took the matches, watching Stavros speculatively. "I think it is better that you go first."

He was blocking the way they had come so Stavros had no choice. He supposed the German would shoot him in the back, but for some reason that possibility did not oppress him as much as the Labyrinth itself. They had come so far and so fast that his sense of direction was off. And when he had gone a few paces, and still the German did not fire, he was scarcely conscious of his relief.

The rock faces were jagged, and Stavros frowned, trying to place them. He would not admit to himself that he was puzzled, but as he stumbled down the passage his uncertainty increased. The one positive fact for him now was the flash and its yellow cone, holding back the dark.

At the next branch he deliberated. "This way," the German ordered.

"No," Stavros said, peering into the shadows. "This is wrong."

The German leveled his gun. "I am guide now."

Stavros met his eyes, and knew that he knew. The German had known all along. This was only his way of ridicule. With a sense of futility Stavros swung around. He had been a fool to imagine that with his dab of useless knowledge he could outwit a trained killing man.

AFTERWARD it seemed to Stavros that at that instant some mighty force yanked the earth from beneath him. It happened so quickly there was no time to shout a warning, and then he was falling through space, his legs still pumping. He landed with a jarring shock, and water closed over his head.

When he surfaced he noticed the tug of a current. He put out his hands and touched a ledge. Gasping for breath, he pulled himself out.

For a long time he lay on his stomach, not trying to move. He was so stunned he kept expecting his eyes to adjust to the darkness, until he realized that this darkness was absolute. It had an almost

tangible quality, black beyond the blackest black. He could not see his hands before his eyes. He could not see anything.

He rolled over and a pebble splashed. "Where are we?"

Stavros had forgotten the German. His voice was so near it startled him. "Turn on your flash," he called.

"I must have dropped it."

Stavros considered. They were in one of the subterranean river channels that honeycombed the quarry, but otherwise he could not identify the place. Even with a light it would be difficult. "You have my matches," he said.

He heard the German sit up. There was a pause, then a pulpy, scraping noise. The German swore. "They're soaked."

Stavros said nothing. As far as he could see there was nothing to say. He rose to a crouch and listened. The only sound was the swish of water.

"My rucksack straps slipped off when I fell," the German said. "I lost everything."

His voice was closer, but muffled, so that Stavros could not tell where it came from. Afterwards it was so still he knew the German was straining to catch his movements. That their personal relationship had changed, he grasped dimly, but he was too concerned with the matter of escape to give it much thought. He felt only that the German was becoming a nuisance.

By inches he worked up the slippery limestone to a higher level. Then a hand grabbed at his throat. He struggled to break free but the German was too strong.

"You'll wait here with me!" the German panted. "Your village will organize a search party when you don't come home tonight."

Stavros swallowed. It was a good plan. Rather a cunning plan. Only the German was unacquainted with Baltazes and old Nika. The village would not come searching. If they knew of Stavros' predicament they would think it funny. Very funny indeed.

"We will starve first."

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"You will lead me out, then," the German decided.

His voice was so controlled, so calm, that the order's absurdity did not occur to Stavros. He said, "What if I cannot?"

Stavros stiffened as something jammed against his side. It was the gun muzzle. The German had lost his light and his food, but he had hung on to his gun. It was like him to do that, Stavros thought.

THE German gripped his belt and prodded. Stavros took one cautious step, and another, until his footing was secure, and began a slow halting walk with his arms extended before his face. All he could be sure of was that this passage led away from the river.

"Don't try anything," the German advised. "I can't miss at this range."

No, he could not miss, not with every bullet. This thought ran through Stavros' mind in confused sequence as the gun pressed his back. Being a slow thinker, he could not reconcile the gun and the fact that the German was dependent upon him.

"Killing me won't get you out," he said presently.

"No, but it will keep you here."

He could feel the German, smell him, even hear the pound of his heart. There was just himself and the German, surrounded by darkness. The silence cleared his brain, and he groped forward, knowing what he must do; the only thing he could do if either of them were to see daylight again.

Guiding himself by one wall, he located an intersection. Openings led in four directions. He lifted his head and shouted. The echo rolled out, divided, then surged back in hollow waves.

"No one can hear you," the German growled.

When the last whisper had subsided Stavros chose a passage. The wet clothes were chill around his body but sweat stood on his face. At any second he might blunder into another channel, and this time break his neck, or worse, a leg. The knowledge that the German would die too afforded small consolation.

His fingers brushed the tunnel wall. It was still jagged, fractured in sharp edges, "The most recent part," he said. "We are very far back."

The German grunted.

"The Turks blasted here with gunpowder," Stavros explained.

He went faster now, tripping on the rough floor. It happened so often he lost count. He bumped into obstructions until his chest and shoulders burned with pain. The German jerked him up and drove him on.

When they reached the next cross passage Stavros shouted again. He put his hand behind his ear, listening tensely. It came back, empty and mocking, and a great weariness crept into him. He repeated the shout, comparing each ripple of sound.

"We've made a complete circle," he said. "This is the same place."

He felt the grip on his belt slacken. The German let out a long breath and Stavros heard him sit down. He slipped into another tunnel. He rubbed its surface, waiting for the German to move.

Finally Stavros said, "We'll try this one next."

HE never knew if it was a short time or a long time. Time was only a void through which he fumbled. His senses were so concentrated in his fingertips that eventually he could not distinguish space from solid rock. He did not even know that his hands were bleeding.

When he found the first pitted face he did not tell the German. A kind of desperate reticence had grown up between them, and Stavros would keep him in doubt, not give him that satisfaction.

It meant they had progressed one cycle toward the Labyrinth's perimeter. The twelfth century Venetians had used blunt-tipped drills that pocked rock like diseased skin. And somewhere ahead he might feel out long vertical grooves, where the Romans of Metellus' age had malleted down iron pitons, and beyond that, the distinctive cracks driven by Greek wedges, and farther still, the smooth blocks quarried by Minoan stonemasons.

Stavros felt no particular elation. He was scarcely conscious of these details

because they were part of his job. He had known them ever since he could remember, and told them to tourists, but he would not tell the German. He would not boast again, as the German had boasted of navigating bombers.

It was dusk when they neared the entrance. Stavros felt the cool fresh air, and he hobbled toward it with a sense of numbed incredulity. The return to light was gradual, a negative thing, a diminution of darkness. It began as a gray dot, growing larger and more pale as they proceeded, until it became the glow of a Mediterranean evening.

Even that softness brought an ache to his eyeballs, and when he looked at the German, the German was squinting back at him. The German released his belt and gestured with the gun. It was as though a boulder had been rolled from Stavros' shoulders. Suddenly he wanted to see the sky.

They stood in the open quarry, absorbing the sights and sounds and smells. When Stavros got around to thinking of Baltazes and Nika again, he realized they would be speculating, and although he was too exhausted to care much, he eyed the German.

The German's face was drawn and marble-white, but expressionless as it had been always, so that it was impossible to know whether he had been afraid or what he might have felt. Stavros supposed that he would never know.

The German slid his gun into the holster and buttoned the flap. "Well," he said, "we made it."

"We made it," Stavros agreed.

"I'll tell you something, guide." The German's mouth twisted as though he were recalling an obscene joke. "I was bluffing back there."

"Yes," Stavros said.

" 'Yes'? What do you mean 'yes'?"

Wearily Stavros said, "At any time I could have left you to die."

Gunfire rattled in the distance and he faced that direction. He had developed a vigorous dislike for this German. He did not expect a tip for his services—a few drachmas to ease his thirst—but he wanted the chance to refuse. Even the poorest tourists, third class, offered something.

"The lieutenant's gun," he said, "was wet. Like my matches. It will not fire, not even now."

For a fraction of a moment the German's self-control slipped. Then his face resumed its faint disdain.

"You're a pretty smart Greek."

Stavros did not hear because he was climbing from the pit. Already the past few hours were assuming an unreality, like incidents of a bad dream. When the war was over he would go on guiding parties through the Labyrinth. It was good work for a man to do, proud and exacting work, but it could wait.

At the top he took one look at the village. Then he headed toward the sound of the gunfire, which was General Mandakas and his guerrillas holding out in the mountains.

There were other ways to kill a German.

Stavros was just drunk enough to be truculent. "I'll fix the Boches!" he shouted.

THE WILD 'UN

By DAVID KEITH-NEWELL

ILLUSTRATED BY PETER KUHLHOFF

Colby, wild with anger, leaped with the explosive quickness of a wounded animal.

FOURTEEN-YEAR-OLD Billy Johnson lengthened his steps to keep up with the man in front of him. Shifting his rifle from his tired shoulder to his right hand, he carried it at his side. Should have a sling on it, he thought. Luke had one on his gun. Soon as he could have his own Winchester, he'd get one just like Luke's. One of the bolt-action kind with peep sights that clicked when you turned the adjustment knob. Worth it, though, if he could hit rocks the size of a plate clear across the canyon the way Luke could.

Billy looked longingly at Luke's buckskin jacket. It was smoke-colored and didn't make any noise as it rubbed against the limbs of the scrub oak bushes. He supposed that when Luke made him some moccasins he'd be able to walk without making any noise, either.

"Hey, Luke," he called softly. "When'll I get my moccasins? You promised you'd make me a pair."

"I'll make you some out of the elk hide, kid. Suppose yore daddy'll let you wear 'em when he knows I give 'em to you?"

"Oh, sure," lied Billy. His daddy probably wouldn't. He'd had to slip off that morning to come up to Luke's cabin to go elk-hunting. Mr. Johnson had called Luke a wild man and told Billy to stay away from him. He'd said, too, that Luke was uneducated and crude. Maybe he hadn't been to school much, and maybe he didn't like towns and people, but, gosh, he must like me, thought Billy. Wouldn't take me out to shoot an elk if he didn't. That's against the law here in the forest. He'd bet that Luke wouldn't take any other kid.

LUKE COLBY stopped at the edge of the thicket and turned to Billy. The boy hung onto every word as Luke told him what to do.

"Almost every morning, about this time, I see a bunch of elk here in the clearing, Billy. The grass is good and they come down here to graze just like cattle. You stay close to me and we'll crawl through the brush till we can see out across the park. Be as quiet as you can. Here, gimme yore rifle a minute."

Billy handed him the .38-55 and Luke levered a cartridge into the chamber. Easing the hammer down to the safety notch, he handed it back.

"While you're crawlin', kid, hold it by the stock with the muzzle pointin' away from you. Sometimes you can hang the hammer agin a bush and pull it back enough to make it shoot. Might be dangerous if you were pullin' it along with the barrel pointin' forward," he grinned. "Even if it missed you, it might scare away my winter's meat."

"I'll be careful, Luke," Billy promised eagerly. "Are you gonna let me shoot first if we see one?"

"Sure, kid, you can shoot, then if you miss, I'll stop him afore he reaches the timber."

Billy followed Luke closely, crawling on his belly, careful to break no dry sticks or let a limb swish. Luke halted at the thicket's edge and parted the brush with his hand. He looked out across the grassy park and motioned to Billy, putting a finger to his lips for silence.

Billy eased up alongside him and put his head close to hear Luke's whisper. "Work yore rifle around and slip it through this scrub oak. Put the barrel on that lower limb. Now when I pull back the limbs in front, you sight on the shoulder of the bull elk to the right. Don't worry about the kick of yore rifle and remember what I said about flinching."

Billy could see, just fifty yards away, six elk grazing quietly, their heads half hidden in the wild hay of the park. Two of them had horns. The one on the right was smaller, not much more than a yearling. Luke must have figured he'd be tenderer than the other bull, the big one farther away to the left of the cows.

Luke reached over and cocked the rifle. "Hold a little above the center of his shoulder, kid. Here, you're shakin' a little. Must be the cold. Shut yore eyes and relax for a minute. We got plenty of time."

Billy closed his eyes, hoping desperately that this wasn't buck fever. Luke might even laugh at him. Sure wouldn't bring him again. He'd done a lot of talking to get here this time.

"Just think that you've got yore twenty-two and you're shootin' at a prairie dog, Billy."

That made it easier. Billy sighted carefully again, saying to himself, *It's just a prairie dog and I've gotta shoot him before he runs in his hole.*

The rifle cracked. Smoke from the black-powder cartridge mushroomed out and drifted away in the slight breeze of the early morning.

"You got 'im, kid," said Luke, helping Billy to his feet. "That gun kick you a little, huh?"

"Did I really kill him, Luke? Gosh, he looks big! Did kick a little, but it don't matter. You gonna let me stick him?"

"No, I'll bleed him, you watch."

"How'll you get him home, Luke?" asked Billy looking down at the fallen elk.

Luke rose to his feet, wiping his knife clean on the grass. "Oh, I'll dress him

here later and pack him out on my pony."

"Aren't you gonna let me help?"

"I'm thinkin' you better be gettin' home, Billy. Old man Johnson might be lookin' for you. Remember what happened when we went deer huntin' awhile back."

Billy remembered. His father had raised the devil about it. Mr. Johnson didn't really dislike Luke, just thought his son might learn ways from him that were a little too wild. A man who avoided people as Luke Colby did, who clothed himself in buckskins and depended mostly on his rifle and traps to make a living, was not a man to set an example for his son.

"I guess I had better go back, Luke. Can I come up tomorrow and eat some of the meat?"

"Sure, kid. Wish I could give you some to take home, but yore pa probably'd turn me in for killin' it."

BACK at the cabin, Luke caught the boy's pony and saw him headed for home. A couple of hours later, the elk was dressed and the meat hung to cool in the shade of a cottonwood. Luke, mounted now on his buckskin pony, had the hide and liver tied behind his saddle. He figured to cook up the liver for lunch, then make a travois of the hide and a couple of long cedar poles from the grove behind his cabin. He ought to be able to pack out the meat in two loads that way.

He slouched easily in the saddle, his long legs swinging loosely against the pony's sides. He was not a large man, yet there was strength in the agile line of his shoulder, the broad powerful hands. His hair grew thick and black on a low brow and the whole look of his dark quiet eyes suggested Indian forebears.

Two men were sitting their horses near his corral when Luke rode out of the aspens into the clearing. He considered, for a moment, turning back into the timber, but hell, they were probably ranchers from down-valley. They would think nothing of his pack load of elk meat. Many of the ranchers hereabouts ate protected elk rather than kill one of their own steers.

He straightened in the saddle when, nearing them, he recognized the taller of the two as Tod McNeil, the park ranger.

"Been gettin' in your winter's meat, huh, Colby?" asked the ranger.

"Yeah," Luke answered hesitantly. "It's a lookin' like snow. Those clouds up around Siwash. Figured I'd better dress out a beef while the weather holds."

"It won't work, fellow," the other man broke in harshly. "We were watching with glasses from the forest trail. We saw you and another fellow kill an elk down in the park. One of you stuck him, then the other left. Where's he at?"

"Take it easy, Bannon," advised the ranger in a low voice. "You won't get anything out of him this way." He turned to Colby and said regretfully, "Guess we'll have to take you in, Luke. There's a $300 fine for killing elk in the National Forest. Better tell us who was with you. Maybe the two of you can split the fine."

"There wasn't nobody with me, Mr. McNeil," Luke lied, wondering where he would get $150, let alone $300. How long would he have to stay in jail to work out the fine?

The heavy-set man, Bannon the ranger had called him, seemed impatient. "Let me handle this, McNeil. I'm used to these damned close-mouthed hillmen." Throwing back his lapel, he showed Luke the sheriff's star pinned to a broad suspender. "Now listen, young fellow, I've heard a lot of talk about the way you've lived off the country. People seem to think you're a second Kit Carson the way you dress in buckskins and shoot that rifle of yours. Come into town two or three times a year, trade what fur you've caught, then live up here like a confounded Siwash Indian!"

He reached inside his coat and drew a revolver. Dropping the sights in line with Colby's chest, he commanded roughly, "Don't make any sudden move, Colby! Unbuckle your gun belt and let it drop. Now step off your pony!"

Luke did as he was told. A man who blustered like that might get excited and pull the trigger.

As the sheriff swung to the ground and started toward Luke, McNeil asked doubtfully, "What are you going to do, Bannon?"

"I intend to find out who was with him. If we make an example of these two, anybody else'll think twice before killin' off an elk. We've been up in this damned forest a week and this is the first arrest we've made. Now let me handle it."

"All right, Bannon, but don't be too harsh with him. I even think he's entitled to an elk now and then considering the mountain lions and lynx-cats he traps."

Luke Colby's face tightened as the sheriff twisted a hand in the collar of his shirt.

"Who was with you, Colby? Start talking or I'll slap some sense into you!"

"Take yore hands offen me! I told you there wasn't nobody with me."

Bannon's face was flushed. His right fist was clenched and drawn back as he spat out the words. "Don't talk to me like that, you half-wild hill-billy. I'll give you just ten seconds to talk before I knock your face in!"

"Stop it, Bannon!" cried out McNeil leaping from his horse, but he was too late. The sheriff's fist, with the full weight of his heavy shoulders behind it, smashed into Luke's face. Blood spattered from crushed nose and lips as he was thrown back by the blow.

"Hold it, you fool." McNeil spoke quietly to the sheriff as he tried to pinion his arms.

But Colby, wild with anger now as his head cleared, leaped at Bannon with all the explosive quickness of a wounded animal. His driving shoulder threw the man backward, his gun exploding harmlessly into the air. Colby seized the sheriff's gun hand with both his own, disregarding the free hand which thudded blows into his face. He twisted the hand with all his strength, forcing the gun back until the barrel was pointed at the sheriff's stomach. Luke's grip tightened on the other's gunhand. Bannon heard the click of the hammer as it slipped back past the safety notch. He tried convulsively to twist away from the gun, but the muzzle still pressed against his body. He felt the inexorable tightening of Luke's trigger finger against his own. He looked down and could see the hammer, now almost to full cock, moving slowly back levered by the trigger pressure of the gun's double action. He screamed then. But the hammer was falling. The bullet, like a lance of flame in his body, choked the scream in his throat. He stepped back half a pace, both hands pressed to his stomach, then toppled forward on his face.

"Good God, Luke!" said McNeil.

For a moment they looked at the dead man sprawled grotesquely between them. One lapel was flung back and the bright metal of the sheriff's star glinted up at them. Luke swallowed hard.

"I'll have to turn you in, son, on a charge of murder. There's nothing else I can do." McNeil said the words slowly and honest regret showed in his face.

But Luke's bewilderment was gone. He turned quickly to McNeil, the sheriff's pistol held firmly in his hand. "No you ain't, Mr. McNeil. I ain't sorry I killed him and I won't spend the rest of my life in jail because of it. Now you take him in town, I'm headin' for the hills."

"Easy, Luke. You're only gonna make things worse for yourself. You'll be cornered back in some canyon by a posse, and they'll kill you, son. They won't stop to ask questions. Maybe if you go along with me now, my word might carry enough weight to make things some easier for you." He took a step forward, but Luke stood his ground. The gun was pointed directly at the ranger now.

"Wait a minute, Mr. McNeil. I know you'd help me, and I don't aim to hurt you none. But they'd hang me for killin' the sheriff. You do like I say now and take him into town. I'll be gone afore they come after me." Keeping McNeil at the point of his gun, he walked over and took the extra cartridges from the ranger's saddlebags. "I reckon I may need these, Mr. McNeil."

"Just use 'em for meat, boy," warned the ranger. He swung the body of the sheriff over the front of his saddle and mounted. "Luke, you're actin' like a damn fool. I can't help you after this."

But Luke was beyond reasoning with.

He watched stoically as McNeil's horse picked its way carefully down the trail with its limp burden.

LUKE turned back into his cabin as the ranger disappeared out of sight. His eyes took in the meager provisions of the room. He gathered up only the barest essentials—matches, a skillet, and a few staples. He took his bedroll off the bunk in the corner and made a rough pack of them. Fear hurried Luke now. His horse was just outside. He tied the pack on behind and swung into the saddle. His heels dug into the pony's sides.

The trail he followed led back into the unbroken fastnesses of the Teton Range. This was where Luke had spent his whole life. The mountains had furnished his food and shelter and the only companionship he had known. The range was good to him. Deer and smaller game were plentiful and the streams ran with fish. Luke shot and trapped through the winter and the hides brought him enough money for cartridges and grub. On his rare trips to town, he hurried through the business of selling the skins and picking up supplies. The town people shook their heads over the dark, inarticulate man and called him "bushed."

Sometimes he made friends with a youngster who might find his way up to the lonely cabin. Luke taught him to shoot and trap, to skin the wild game and tan the hide. He showed him the best places to fish and hunt and how to build a rabbit-snare.

One day Luke had appeared at the county school. He was only a kid, then, fifteen, perhaps, and tall for his age. "I reckon I need some learnin'," was all he had said. He had gone to school the better part of a year. He studied his books with the same stoic persistence that he tracked a deer, and seemed not to notice the other children around him who were mostly half his size. He had been gruffly courteous to the teacher, building the fires in the small stove and sweeping out the schoolhouse. When he had learned to read and write a little, he had stopped coming and the Tetons had swallowed him up again. That was the only time he had asked anything of the town and the people had been content to let him go his own way.

Luke Colby camped that night far up Bear Creek. His little campfire was hidden in an aspen-choked draw. The buckskin pony, loosely hobbled, grazed nearby, snorting occasionally when the howl of a timber wolf disturbed the silence of the Wyoming night.

Coffee was boiling in a gallon can. Luke watched the amber bubbles rise, touch the stick across the top and settle back. He had never been able to figure out why the little green stick should keep the coffee from boiling over, but it did, always. The sliced elk liver was done. Luke removed the skillet and, pouring himself a cup of coffee, ate his meal.

Laid out behind him was his bedroll, rubber poncho and Navajo blanket, spread upon a canvas tarp. On the side of the bed, nearest his hand, was the Winchester rifle, glinting dully in the firelight. Hanging across a limb, on a tree beyond the fire, was the green elk hide.

Might as well start smoke-tanning that hide tonight, Luke thought. He would fasten it cone-shaped with wooden skewers and suspend it over the fire after it burned down. He'd throw a lot of leaves on the fire to make a good smoke. There was nothing like smoke-tanned elkskin for making moccasins. He wished he could get a pair down to Billy Johnson, some way. The kid had begged him for them off and on for a year. Luke poured himself the last of the coffee, his thoughts still on Billy. Luke mentally kicked himself. He'd promised the kid his moccasins out of this skin, knowing that it would mean twice as much to him to have a pair off the hide of an elk he'd killed himself. Making the moccasins was an easy enough job, but how would he get them down to Billy? His mind wrestled with the problem without success. Oh, well, he'd get 'em made, anyway, and then see what happened.

Luke sat on his heels, gazing thoughtfully into the fire. He kept his mind resolutely from this morning's scene. What had happened had happened, and nothing could change it now. He would keep

pushing on to his trapping camp back in the hills. There had been food left over when he pulled his traps last spring, and he had locked it safely inside the cabin. It was hanging from the rafters with wires where mice and packrats couldn't spoil it. Half a sack of potatoes, flour, some dried fruit and part of a side of bacon. Last a long time, that. The Tetons, with their abundance of game, would furnish most of his food. Meat and fish 'til the creeks froze up. He'd make out all right.

ORDINARILY, Luke would have rolled his blanket around him and slept without moving until the dawn, but sleep was elusive tonight. It came, touched him pleasantly, then left him with the confusion of his thoughts. They were like dreams, not clear, but indistinct, formless as deer tracks in melting snow. They shifted, blurred and hazy, from Billy Johnson and his old Winchester to the man who was dead now, killed by the gun Luke had tried to twist from his hand. That gun wasn't like his own single-action Colt; it had fired without first being cocked, when he pressed the sheriff's finger against the trigger. He felt again the sudden leap of the gun still in the sheriff's hand and forced close to his body, and could smell the acrid smoldering of shirt cloth burned by the flash of powder. Then, McNeil's shocked "Good God, Luke!"

He sat up trembling.

"There ain't no use trying to sleep," he said out loud. "Might as well start now and make it deeper back into the hills. They'll be lookin' for me by morning."

Luke spread the elkskin, hardened now by heat and smoke, and rolled his pack inside it. He caught the buckskin, and with the pack tied by the saddle-strings behind him, rode through the darkness to the ridge beyond. It was lighter here and he could keep the pony to a trot along the top of the ridge, heading north.

When Luke pulled up beside a shallow feeder stream that flowed down from the Siwash range into Bear Creek, it was long after noon. He had ridden hard, stopping but once. That was at the point where the trail crossed the brow of Siwash, the grim-visaged peak that looked down over the park. Luke had watched carefully the forestry trail that branched off the Deerfoot road below old man Johnson's place, and wound up Bear Creek until it disappeared into the timber. He had seen no possemen riding the trail or crossing the clearings down the park, but there was no assurance in that. A posse might have left Deerfoot, the county seat, yesterday as soon as McNeil got into town and told what had happened. If so, they might have got as far as Johnson's and spent the night there. Well, even if they had, he was miles ahead and he meant to keep his lead.

The buckskin pony tore hungrily at the grass that grew tall along the creek bank. Luke swung out of the saddle and loosened the cinch to let him blow. He fished inside the pack and found a hook and line. A mess of trout would go pretty good now, he thought, tying the line to an alder pole. He felt like his stomach was sticking to his backbone. He baited the hook with a grub from a rotten log and dropped it into the pool that eddied deep and clear below a moss-covered boulder. A brook trout, lively in the icy water, arched up and smashed the bait. Luke twitched the alder pole, smiling as he felt the weight of the trout straighten the line.

The trout cooked, rolled in a coat of mud and with the fire built over it, while pan-fried biscuits browned in the shallow skillet. Cracking off the brick hard mud, Luke ate the fish, succulent and tasty from its own juices, and washed it down with steaming cups of coffee.

Luke rode steadily that afternoon. He had covered a lot of country when he pulled in at an unused cabin far off the beaten trail near sundown. It was an old trapper's cabin, long since vacated. The door stood half open. There were deep clawmarks in its frame testifying to the entrance of a bear prowling in search of salt. Luke's eyes took in the rusty stove with its sagging pipe standing at the other end. Near it, under the little window, was a three-legged table. In the corner to his right was the bunk padded

with wild hay, musty now, and rotten. Ought to do for the night, Luke decided. Stove would probably smoke a lot. He'd better wait till after dark to build a fire. It would be dark, anyway, before he got through unpacking and hobbling the pony, and could get a couple of grouse for supper. Luke had argued with himself about risking the sound of shots, but, hell, they knew he was back here in the woods somewhere, and the sound of his rifle couldn't tell 'em much ten miles away.

NEXT morning he sat at the little table facing the open door. Early sunlight streaked the cabin with the pale warmth of an October dawn. Luke had found a can of oatmeal on the shelf above the stove. It was stale and old, not fit to eat. Maybe, the buckskin would like it, though, he thought.

The pony, grazing down by the creek, threw up his head at the sound of Luke's whistle and started toward him, stepping short because of the hobbles. He sniffed the oatmeal spread out on the grass, then ate it hungrily. Luke, watching him from the door, wished he had oats for him.

There was a sound in the air like ripping canvas and Luke felt the world explode around his ears as he fell to the ground. Buck snorted at the crack of the high-powered rifle, then nickered as he saw a horseman ride out of the timber. Luke felt his head, saw the blood on his hand and struggled frantically to a sitting position. He could see the rider coming toward the cabin, another man behind him, just emerging from the timber.

"By God! I'll show 'em!" He reached for his rifle leaning against the wall. The first man opened fire again as he saw Luke settle the rifle stock against his shoulder. Luke wiped the blood from his eyes and tried to center the sights. The wide post of the front sight blurred, then wavered into line. A bullet plucked at Luke's sleeve as he squeezed the trigger. The 30/06 bullet smashed into the man's forearm and tore the rifle from his hands. He sawed wildly at the reins and swung his horse back toward the timber.

The second man swung off his pony and, sheltered behind the horse, took aim across the saddle. His first shot caromed from the door jamb and threw splinters into Luke's face. Luke worked the bolt of his rifle rapidly, firing at the man's legs under the horse's belly, but his shots went wild. One bullet grazed the horse and he lunged, jerking the man off his feet as he grabbed for the flying reins. Luke fired and missed again. The man scrambled to his feet and ran for the timber. Luke heard him call "Cleve, Cleve!" and saw the man he had shot in the arm yank his horse to a stop while the other grasped the cantle of the saddle and swung up behind.

Luke rose unsteadily to his feet. "Damned bushwhackin' cowards," he muttered. "Maybe they won't foller me so close now." He felt the wound in his head. It was sort of deep and still bleeding. Luke remembered the gash one of his 30/06 bullets had made across the head of a deer once. Looked like it had been hit with an axe. He tore a sleeve out of his shirt and tied it tightly around the wound, pushing it up above his eyes. The aching lessened and his brain cleared a little.

"I've gotta hurry!" he thought in sudden fear. Those men would bring back the rest of the posse.

It took two tries for Luke to get in the saddle, but he finally made it, then headed north again. He rode fast, stopping only for a minute at each brook to bathe his head with the cool water. Each step of the pony sent fresh waves of pain throbbing into his brain. The bandage kept slipping down into his eyes and Luke tightened it savagely; finally jerking it off and throwing it away. Luke's chin was on his chest; he was hardly conscious of the country through which he rode.

Once, coming from the timber into a grassy mountain park, the pony snorted at the sight of feeding elk. The startled elk took to the woods, their heads in the air. Luke watched them go, remembering the afternoon that he and Billy Johnson had gone elk hunting. Could that have been only day before yesterday? He saw Billy's eager, intent face. Luke laughed to himself a little. Poor kid, he'd had a good case of buck-fever there for a min-

ute. But he got his elk after all. Luke's face sobered. But, hell, he thought, what had he got out of it? Not even a piece of elk liver. He must sure think I run out on him. Maybe if I make him those moccasins, he won't hold it agin me so much.

The mid-day sun beat down on Luke's head. The trees blurred in front of him like reflections in a pool of water. He wiped the perspiration from his eyes and felt the crusted blood on his temple.

THE MOON was high when Luke pulled the pony to a stop and took his bearings. Just across this flat and back in the timber was his cabin. There was food and shelter waiting for him and they'd never find him here. This was where he would stay. Safe, now, in the heart of the Tetons.

"You know, Buck," he whispered in the pony's ear. "There may be some oats left in the cabin. You can have 'em. I'll hobble you out here on the flat every night where you can graze, and I'll tie you back in the timber in the daytime. Then I'll set some snares, so's I won't have to shoot game. There ain't nobody gonna find us if we don't make no noise. And," he added, "I can make Billy those moccasins." He smiled and patted the roll of elkskin.

Luke had started across the flat when he pulled up suddenly. Light filtered through the cracks of the boarded-up side window! They had found his cabin! He turned Buck and rode back into the timber, feeling pretty sure no one had heard him ride up. Then he dismounted and tied the pony to a tree.

For a moment he stood, irresolute. His cabin had meant safety and rest for him. Who could have found it? Some hunter or trapper? More likely some of the posse.

Keeping in the shadow of the trees, he crept slowly and silently around the edge of the clearing to the cabin. He caught the faint warm smell of food cooking mingled with the smoke from the chimney. Flattening himself against the side of the cabin, he pressed his head close to the logs.

He was barely able to distinguish the sound of their voices. Two men, he figured, maybe three.

He felt his way farther along the wall, and glued his eye to a crack between the boards covering the window. Two men were sitting before the fire, eating from plates stacked high with meat and potatoes. Luke's stomach contracted at sight of the food, and made him dizzy for a minute as he held to the sill of the window. They had taken his sacks of food from the rafter. One lay open behind them; that was the sack he had left full of potatoes and dried fruit.

Luke recognized neither of the men, but they were obviously part of the posse. One of them sat facing him, and Luke could see a badge fastened to his open coat. He was talking loud enough now for Luke to make out the words clearly.

"Cleve and Jim oughtta be back by now. They may be lost in this damned wilderness. Hell, they shouldn't have gone in the first place! We had orders to stay right here and wait for Colby."

The other man poured himself a cup of coffee. "Well, Jim thought those shots he heard when we were on our way up here last night came from the direction of an old cabin over on Cove Creek. He figured as how Colby might have camped there." He pulled a heavy watch from his vest pocket and scowled at it. "Damn near ten o'clock. It was about this time last night when they decided to go back down there and have a look."

The man with the badge tipped his chair back and rolled a cigarette. "Don't reckon they could have run into trouble, do you? Colby might have seen 'em first if he was there."

"Not Cleve Benton!" Luke heard the man chuckle. "He would have looked that cabin over from the brush, and if Colby was around, well—Benton wouldn'ta took any chances!"

Luke fingered the gash in his head. No, Benton hadn't took any chances. He strained to catch the next words.

"Still, they oughta be back. 'Course, they may be camping there tonight."

The men started scraping out the supper dishes and Luke was unable to hear their conversation. When the tin plates and skillet were soaking in a pail of water,

the men sat down again before the fire.

"Tod McNeil says that Colby uses this cabin when he traps up here in winter. We'll just wait here till Colby comes in. I figure he'll stop here for grub to last him till he can make it to the Hole in the Wall."

Luke cussed the wandering park ranger. He should have known that McNeil would stumble on his cabin on one of his smoke-chasing trips back into the Tetons.

"Yeah, that's where he'll head for all right. Safest hideout in the country. That's the place where Cassidy and the Sundance Kid hid out for years."

One of the men grunted as he pulled off his boots and thrust his feet nearer the fire. "Luke Colby'll never get there, though. There's enough men in these hills now to bottle up an army. He hasn't got a chance with half Wyoming lookin' for him."

Luke had heard enough. He left the cabin and made his way carefully back to Buck. For several moments, he stood with a hand on the saddle horn, deep in thought. "I can't stay here at my cabin, can't get no grub. Not without shootin' those men, and I ain't aimin' to kill nobody more." He remembered what they had said about the Hole in the Wall. "Safest hideout in the country." He could make it there all right, even without grub. These mountains were full of game and he still had flour and salt.

But if he were up there, holing up with a bunch of outlaws, how could he ever get those moccasins to Billy. Luke felt the elkhide still tied behind the saddle. Gosh, wouldn't the kid be pleased with a pair made out of that!

"I'll make 'em," he decided suddenly. "I'll camp back in some cove, snare some rabbits for grub, and that'll give me a chance to tan this hide and make some doggoned fine moccasins! I can sneak down and give 'em to Billy and then line out for the Hole in the Wall!"

Luke climbed back in the saddle. His face had brightened as he mapped out a plan for himself, but now exhaustion showed in every line of his body. His eyes held a strained and hunted look, as he and Buck started quietly back down the trail.

LUKE had smoked the hide for two nights now. For endless hours he had pulled it back and forth around a smooth aspen sapling. It was soft, pliable and felt like silk in his hands. Luke's eyes, deep-socketed now, lighted lovingly as he worked the leather, softening it still further.

"I'll cut 'em a mite smaller than if I was makin' 'em for myself," he said. "Billy's feet ain't so big as mine." He honed his knife on a smooth stone, whetting it to razor sharpness. Then he cut the half-round pieces for the moccasins, flaring it out at the edges near the back. He wished he had some beads so he could make real fancy ones, like the Indians used. Leastways, he would leave fringe around the top and maybe he could get a porcupine and work in a pattern of quills. That would please the kid.

Luke circled far around the park and crossing the lower Siwash Range, approached Bear Creek from the east. Old man Johnson's ranch lay just down the creek.

Luke Colby was thinner now. The buckskins hung loosely on his spare frame. There was an unaccustomed stoop to his shoulders from the ever throbbing weight of pain in his head. His once alert eyes were slow to focus and ringed with dark shadows.

Buck nickered as they approached the ranch house. Luke quickly stopped him by pressing a hand across his nostrils. It wouldn't do to rouse Johnson. Luke left his horse and came up afoot to the edge of the woods behind the house. No one was in sight. He would wait here until he saw Billy, then he would whistle.

For a long time he waited, but no one came out of the house.

"Why, of course," Luke realized suddenly. "Billy's still in town! He ain't out of school yet."

He hadn't thought of that before. It was going to be harder to get the moccasins to Billy now. Could he take the chance of going to town? Time was getting too short to wait out here all afternoon for Billy. He might not come right home from school, and by dark, Luke knew he'd have to be back in the Tetons, heading for the Hole in the Wall.

Deerfoot was quiet when Luke stopped his horse at the edge of town. There were never many people, and now with every man who could sit a horse out with the posse, the town seemed almost deserted. The two saloons down the street were silent behind their false fronts.

"Guess I'll have to slip down into the town," Luke decided. "Might not see him here, when he comes out of school."

He tied Buck with a slip knot. Someone else might see him, and if they did, he'd sure be in a hurry when he came back for his horse. Ought to be able to keep out of sight, he figured. The timber came almost to the rear of the blacksmith shop. He could wait between the shop and the feed store next to it. He would whistle to Billy when he came by.

Luke glanced nervously at the sun. School should be out any minute now. He wished he could see down the street, but the feed store shut off the view. If he stepped three feet out into the street, he could see the schoolhouse. He decided to take just one quick look. Luke stepped from between the buildings.

"Holy Gee! It's Luke Colby!"

The shout came from across the street. Luke spun around toward the sound, but there was no one in sight. Just a two-story building with an open window on the second floor. For a second, Luke stood as if frozen, then made a leap for cover as he saw a movement.

But he was too late. A rifle cracked from the second story. Luke pitched forward on his face. He heard as if from a distance the sound of shouts and the quick thud of running feet. He lay without moving until the wall of blackness in front of his eyes subsided. As his vision cleared, he raised himself on one elbow. His eyes shone with the alertness of the old Luke. With the last of his strength, he grasped his Winchester firmly and took careful aim.

Down the steps of the house across the street, stumbled a boy. His face was flushed with excitement, and clutched in his hand was a single shot .22. Halfway across the street, he stopped short. The excitement drained from his face as he looked down the steady barrel of Luke's rifle. Frantically, the boy tried to reload his own, but his frightened fingers fumbled as he pushed the cartridge into the chamber.

Luke's finger relaxed on the trigger. Why, hell, that buck-fevered kid wasn't much older than Billy! He laid his rifle down gently; his hands slackened on the stock.

THERE was a crowd, gathered around Colby's body when Billy Johnson, wide-eyed and curious, tried to press close.

"Must have been crazy, comin' back into town," Limpy Swanson, swamper at the Silvertone Saloon, was saying.

"Say that Madison kid sure had a lot of nerve to shoot it out with him!"

"Suppose he came in to rob the bank?"

They all talked at once and no one noticed Billy standing at the edge of the crowd.

Tom Moore, the barber, was holding something up for all to see. "Look what he had with him, fellows!" It was a pair of elkskin moccasins, fringed at the top and with an inlaid circle of porcupine quills.

"Oh!" exclaimed Billy, pushing forward in delight. But the sound stifled in his throat. How could he claim them, even though he knew Luke must have meant 'em for him? Then everybody'd start askin' questions and his father would find out he'd been with Luke that day. Billy nudged his way back through the crowd to where he had tied his pony. He could see that big-mouthed Madison kid, proud and excited in the center of the crowd. Billy caught the boy's words.

"That's right," he was saying. "Plugged him clean in the chest 'fore he could even get his gun up."

Billy dug his heels viciously into the pony's sides.

THE ANCHOR FROM MURMANSK

By BEN MERSON

THE sea was calm, his flannel underwear no longer itched, and there would be tripe for breakfast. But Captain Phineas Wyncoop was not happy. Brooding on the *Scylla's* bridge deck, he contemplated his fate. Forty years a master, and now he had this—a mongel motorship; without boilers, without steam, without smokestack. Verily, he was a martyr on Mount Misery. From the Erie Basin to Murmansk he had borne his cross, and now back.

A puff of wind made a rift in the predawn fog. He stared at the *Scylla's* pug-nosed bow and snorted. The conversion job on this old 14,000-tonner was enough

ILLUSTRATED BY GORDON GRANT

Like a jack-in-the-box, the officer catapulted to the bridge, bellowing orders. . . .

. . . *And then the* Scylla *shuddered and plunged full speed ahead at the U-boat.*

to disgust any deep-water mariner. Her lines were a sacrilege. Even the Russians had shrugged when she arrived with a load of heavy tanks. "The lady who doesn't smoke," they called her. But the Russians were polite. Over at the Erie Basin the longshoremen guffawed at her long, skinny exhaust pipe and dubbed her the "Silly."

"Aye, silly she is," muttered Captain Wyncoop.

And if anything, he reflected morosely, she looked even sillier now. She had lost an anchor in Murmansk, and the Russians had replaced it with one that must have come off a warship. He had never seen anything quite like it. With ponderous shank and sharp blades, it protruded from the port hawsepipe, dipping in the sea like a monstrous fish hook as the heavy-laden *Scylla* ploughed along with decks almost awash.

Captain Wyncoop stepped into the chartroom and traced the course. Grudgingly he admitted the *Scylla* was fast. He could see now why they had rushed her out without so much as a deck gun to carry the first cargo of new-type tanks. She had averaged eighteen knots on the eastward voyage. Returning now with a capacity load of Russian manganese she had kept the same pace.

Larsen, the first mate, entered. "Mist is lifting in patches, sir," he reported.

Captain Wyncoop nodded him out, and groaned. That meant they would be back in Brooklyn in two days. This fantastic-looking scow, with her reversible rudder and other electric gadgets, had justified her design. He was doomed to remain her skipper.

He bowed his head. The accursed tub was a penance. In a lifetime spent at sea he had never lost a ship. And then a month after Pearl Harbor two in succession torpedoed under him—the *Groton* and the *Finch*. War or no war, no New Bedford man who had lost two commands could face Heaven with an open countenance.

Still brooding, he made his way forward to the wheelhouse. The helmsman was swinging her over sharply. Captain Wyncoop settled his paunch against the engine-room telegraph and bristled. It was only two degrees northeast of here that the *Groton* had been torpedoed, and the *Finch* in the same area. Both by a skulking killer too cowardly to rise and face these fine old ships.

"A plague on all U-boats," he muttered bitterly.

Like an evil echo came a roar from the bridge wing: "U-boat! U-boat off port beam!"

CAPTAIN WYNCOOP gulped and swallowed his quid. Framed against a backdrop of gray-red mist, the submarine lay a hundred yards off; a sleek, streamlined hog wallowing in the trough of the swells, her hatch covers open, ridding herself of her stink. A half dozen seamen loafed about her deck rails. Another, wearing an officer's cap, had his head stuck through the conning tower bridge. It was he who spotted the *Scylla* emerging from the patch fog. Like a jack-in-the box, he catapulted to the bridge deck, bellowing orders.

Sliding and skidding on the wet gratings, two seamen rushed to the forward deck gun. Two others scrambled to the gun aft. One each plummeted down the hatches, slamming them shut; all accomplished with amazing precision.

But amazing as they were, these reflexes were merely human, whereas Captain Wyncoop's reactions were those of a man inspired. For in the instant between the sighting of the U-boat and the swallowing of his quid, he had been vouchsafed a revelation. The *Scylla* was not his cross. The *Scylla* with her shameful gadgets was to be an avenging sword.

He flicked a pudgy finger, and the ship seemed to stand on her stern as she answered the reversing rudder. "Hard a-starboard!" he roared, signaling full speed ahead. The *Scylla* shuddered and plunged bow deep at the U-boat.

For an instant he saw the submarine towering on a pillar of water, fire flashing from both guns; and then part of the *Scylla's* foremast toppling into the sea. But that was all. For as the *Scylla* struck, his paunch struck, too. Bounding off the engine-room telegraph post, he skimmed backward, glanced off the wall and landed sitting up. Vaguely in his flight he heard the dull boom of hull on hull and the

squeal of riven steel. He listened without moving. The *Scylla's* Diesels were vibrating smoothly. "Probably cut the slimy thing in two," he chuckled aloud.

Puffing to his feet, he huried down to the bow. He noted with annoyance that almost half the crew were congregated at the rail, including the armed watch who should have been on the bridge deck. They milled and shoved, gawking excitedly overside. "What's the meaning of this, Mr. Larsen?" he demanded. The first mate pointed enigmatically. Captain Wyncoop elbowed his way through the men and looked down. There, speared by the Russian anchor, lay the U-boat.

"Beelzebub on a pitchfork!" breathed the captain.

He bent lower over the rail. The German craft, a small 350-tonner, had been struck a glancing blow, and the impact had ripped a gash vertically in her hull. Through this the protruding anchor blade had caught as the U-boat was swept alongside the freighter. But caught in such a way that she was helpless. For her bottom rested easily on the water, and the anchor, snagged firmly behind her plates, held her without strain.

Staring at her, Captain Wyncoop recalled his two lost ships. Clearly Providence had placed the means of retribution in his hands. And what he had to do now seemed ordained—drop the anchor and drag this evil thing to her destruction.

A twinge of conscience, like sciatica, made him squirm. Providence could dispense its own judgments. The first law of the sea was to save lives—even the lives of sneaking pirates who flew a swastika for a Jolly Roger. And as an honorable old New Bedford skipper he was beholden to his duty.

Captain Wyncoop straightened up. "Mr. Larsen," he said, "give the order to stop ship and get a man overside to tap out a message."

Larsen hurried aft, with an anxious glance at the U-boat's deck guns. Captain Wyncoop scoffed at his ignorance. At this point-blank range the guns were useless. If fired, the shells might ricochet and destroy the sub. And if they did penetrate the *Scylla's* hull, the explosions would tear the sub apart, especially in her battered condition.

Presently Larsen was back, followed by Muscles Peabody, the hulking ship's carpenter. Muscles, who had been a Navy signalman, lugged a heavy wrench. Captain Wyncoop addressed him formally. "Mr. Peabody," he said, pointing to the U-boat, "signal two of the bilge eels to emerge so that we may make her fast." Muscles nodded. "And warn them, Mr. Peabody, no tricks. Otherwise we let go the anchor and tow 'em to hell."

A JACOB'S ladder was lowered and Muscles descended. He rapped on the conning tower hatch. It opened slowly. A rifle barrel, then a head popped out. Muscles slammed the head with his wrench. The head vanished, and the hatch snapped shut. Muscles looked up inquiringly to the *Scylla*. "Complete the message, Mr. Peabody," Captain Wyncoop ordered.

Muscles pounded steadily in international code. There was no answer. He looked up for further instructions. Captain Wyncoop pulled out his watch. "Tell them we give them two minutes," he called. Then turning to Larsen, who stood at the windlass: "Prepare to drop the hook, sir."

Muscles banged rhythmically. There was a pause. Then the escape hatches flung open and two bedraggled seamen climbed out to opposite ends.

"All right, Mr. Larsen, make her fast," said Captain Wyncoop. He seemed disappointed.

Wire cables were passed down. Working rapidly, the Germans made them fast bow and stern. Then, at a signal from Muscles, the *Scyllas* windlass drew the cables taut.

"Up bums!" bawled Muscles, waving his wrench. The Germans scooted up the ladder to the foc'sle head, where they were marched to the captain's cabin.

Captain Wyncoop remained at the rail. It was full dawn now, and as he examined the submarine more closely he became sharply apprehensive. The gash in her hull extended some distance be-

low the waterline. How far he could not tell. But her crew might make repairs. Submarines were equipped for such emergencies.

"Mr. Larsen," he said, "we'll have to get help—damn quick. Radio the Coast Guard."

"Can't sir," said Larsen. He jerked a thumb at the shattered mast. "Antenna's down."

"Rig an emergency," said Captain Wyncoop impatiently.

"Yes, sir," said Larsen, without budging.

"Well?" barked the captain.

"Our signals might raise another sub, sir."

Captain Wyncoop walked moodily to his cabin. He sat down at his desk and eyed the two prisoners. They stood at ease, ignoring their guard. Too damn much at ease, reflected the captain.

"Speak English?" he snapped to the German at the left.

The seaman, a bullet-headed bruiser, shrugged.

Captain Wyncoop turned to the other, who was slender and dark-haired. "How about you?"

"Somewhat."

The reply made Captain Wyncoop start. The accent was curiously Bostonian.

"Your name?"

"Franz Heller."

"Rank?"

"Seaman."

Captain Wyncoop felt his stomach grow oddly tense, like the time he ate monkey meat in Zamboanga. The man was obviously lying. He stifled a feeling of rising panic, and continued the questioning.

"How many men aboard?"

"Twenty."

"And officers?"

"Including officers, *Herr Kapitan.*" The German was blandly polite.

"What is your damage?"

"Flooded control-room."

"Any casualties?"

"The four men lost on deck and *Oberleutnant* Webber."

The frank replies increased Captain Wyncoop's apprehension. This man Heller's story hung together. A small submarine, such as this was, would have carried about twenty-five officers and men. And from her appearance, a flooded control-room was the logical damage. But Heller with his Bostonian accent was no ordinary seaman. He was an officer. Something foul was afoot. There might be a way to confirm it.

Captain Wyncoop summoned his best passenger service manner. "Mr. Heller," he said, "you may return to your ship. My compliments to your commander. And inform him that the hospitality of the *Scylla* is at the disposal of himself and his crew."

Heller clicked his heels. "Captain Hockschmidt anticipated your kind invitation." He smiled, and Captain Wyncoop thought he could detect a trace of mimicry in his manner. "But Captain Hockschmidt extends his regrets. He and his men prefer to remain with our ship. That is our tradition, *Mein Herr.*"

The amenities were too much for Captain Wyncoop. "Toss these scum in the chain locker," he bellowed to the guard.

ALONE in his cabin, Captain Wyncoop gnawed morosely on a slab of plug, turning over Heller's answers in his mind. Refusal of the U-boat crew to emerge confirmed his worst suspicions. Their commander undoubtedly had sent Heller out to play for time while the repair crew went to work. There was but one course open—let go the anchor chain and drag the submarine along until she smashed up.

He arose to give the order, then dropped back as he thought of a sinister possibility. He had warned the Germans what would happen if he dropped the anchor. They might make a rush for the deck guns and sink the *Scylla* as the chain was paid out. He mopped his brow. The only remaining solution was to run for New York with the submarine as she was.

Hurrying into the wheelhouse, he signaled full speed ahead. It was all a gamble. From the condition of the U-boats hull he estimated it would take her crew at least twenty hours to make full repairs. By that time the *Scylla* would be in patrolled waters. He could

radio for help then. There was the chance an enemy craft would intercept the message. But it was a chance he had to take.

Summoning Larsen, he gave detailed instructions. An emergency antenna was to be strung, and the watch doubled—eight armed men on the starboard bow. "If any of the krauts climb out, shoot 'em off," he ordered grimly.

The hours passed in tense monotony. Periodically, Captain Wyncoop descended to the bow to examine the U-boat. She hung as they had lashed her, hatches battened down, silent, trailing a thin hissing wake. At noon a flock of gulls wheeled over the *Scylla*. Captain Wyncoop scanned the sky hopefully for a plane. The gulls screamed, and two of them glided to the bridge. They had uncommonly long beaks. To Captain Wyncoop they looked as if they were sneering.

Dusk came, and then the night, without moon or stars. The *Scylla* thrummed ahead, a blacked-out shape in the blackness.

At midnight the captain left the wheelhouse. Wearily, he entered his cabin and sat at the desk. His Bible lay under the shaded lamp. He opened it. The pages were old and yellow-seared, and in their touch, he found a familiar, reassuring strength. He read, and closed his eyes. A great calm pervaded him. And then suddenly it happened . . . a discord of excited shouting . . . the high-pitched chorus of gunfire . . . and Larsen standing before him. "They've done it, Captain!"

"They've done what, Mr. Larsen?"

"I don't know, sir. We can't see."

Captain Wyncoop closed his Bible gently. "Mr. Larsen," he said, "focus a floodlight on the submarine."

Larsen stared in amazement. "But that might summon another one, sir. . ."

"Please, Mr. Larsen, do as you're told."

Standing on the port bow, Captain Wyncoop inspected the U-boat. The broad, brilliant beam from the *Scylla's* foremast illumined her black hull clearly. Several hacksaws lay on her deck. With these the cables fore and aft had been cut while the *Scylla's* engines drowned out the noise. It was not until the Germans ran for the hatches that they were detected. But they escaped the gunfire of the watch.

Looking further, he noted with a start that the hole in the U-boat was gone. The *Scylla's* anchor still held her fast. But a steel plate had been ingeniously welded to cover every inch except where the blade penetrated. The U-boat was unquestionably seaworthy. And now the crew was probably at work cutting the anchor with acetylene torches.

Larsen spoke up nervously. "Shall I radio for help, sir?"

Captain Wyncoop shook his head. It was too late for that. What a fool he had been to play the Samaritan. He should have sent the accursed U-boat down to the devil the moment he hooked her. Now there was only one hope. To take every man aboard her prisoner—immediately. But how?

HE thought of several plans, but discarded each as foolhardy or impractical. Perplexed, with a sense of mounting panic, he stared at the U-boat. She swayed rhythmically in the swells, little streams of water swishing in her gratings. Absently, he watched them. The little streams would merge, race toward the hatches and then, frustrated, pour overside. Captain Wyncoop studied them, fascinated. Slowly a faint smile dawned on his face. It tinged the shadows of his nose and lighted his eyes.

"Mr. Larsen," he said softly, "what says the Bible if thine enemy smite thee on one cheek?"

"Turn the other, sir." Larsen's voice was weak.

"Aye. And if he smite thee on the other?"

"The Bible doesn't say."

"You're a heathen, Mr. Larsen." Captain Wyncoop's smile was now cherubic. "The answer is—kick him in the bilge."

Captain Wnycoop's smile vanished. "Mr. Larsen," he said grimly, "get three men with acetelyne torches, three men with hoses and prime the pumps."

In two minutes Larsen returned and everything was in readiness. The *Scylla's* engines had been slowed to hold her steady without drift. Captain Wyncoop, minus his cap and pea jacket, was in the

bow, swinging two looped Manila lines. He tossed one, and it settled around the U-boat's forward gun. Then he flipped the second. It went around the other gun. Crewmen made the ropes fast. The submarine's motion became synchronized with that of the *Scylla*.

Captain Wyncoop nodded to the armed watch. Scrambling down the Jacob's ladder, they trained their submachine guns on the U-boat's conning tower and escape hatches.

"Now, Mr. Larsen," said the captain, "follow me."

They descended. Next came the three seamen carrying the torches, which were connected to drums of acetylene in the *Scylla's* bow. Muscles followed to supervise the lowering of the hoses.

Captain Wyncoop pointed to the hatches. "Cut away," he ordered.

The gas hissed. Bursts of flame tore at the heavy steel covers, lacerating the edges. The scars grew wider.

The conning tower hatch gave way first. It collapsed in a cascade of sparks. Then the other two toppled inward.

Captain Wyncoop indicated the hoses. "You may baptize the devil, Mr. Larsen," he said.

The nozzles were thrust into the hatchways. Larsen signaled to the *Scylla's* deck. The hoses flexed and squired. And then they gushed—three furious streams that pounded and roared down the black openings.

Captain Wyncoop cocked an ear. From within the U-boat came wild shouts, strangled oaths and the clumping of feet.

"More pressure, Mr. Larsen," said Captain Wyncoop, striding to the forward hatch where Muscles was at work.

The hoses snaked madly. The howls and shouts from below came louder and shriller. And then the Germans tumbled out. By twos and threes, sputtering and choking, they gushed from the hatches, overflowing onto the decks, skidding and rolling on the wet gratings. As each came to rest, he was scooped up by the watch and lined up at the rail.

Last to emerge was the U-boat commander. He literally rose through the conning tower bridge on a geyser, water streaming from nose and ears, blowing like a porpoise. The spray struck Muscles directly in the eye. With a whoop, Muscles seized him by the trousers, swung him back like a bowling ball and sent him sailing across the deck. He landed among his men, bottom side up.

Captain Wyncoop stalked over to the group and eyed them in silence. Then suddenly he sniffed and his nose twitched. "Take charge, Mr. Larsen," he said abruptly. Turning on his heel, he clambered back to the *Scylla*.

At the Brooklyn Navy Yard they talked about it for weeks: how Captain Wyncoop came in with the submarine and later passed out after eating sixty-four Cape Cod oysters in a place on Dean Street. And how the naval commandant made a photograph of the following entry in the *Scylla's* log:

March 5. . . . Cut three holes in Nazi tin can. Rinsed well. Washed up twenty eels. They smelled.

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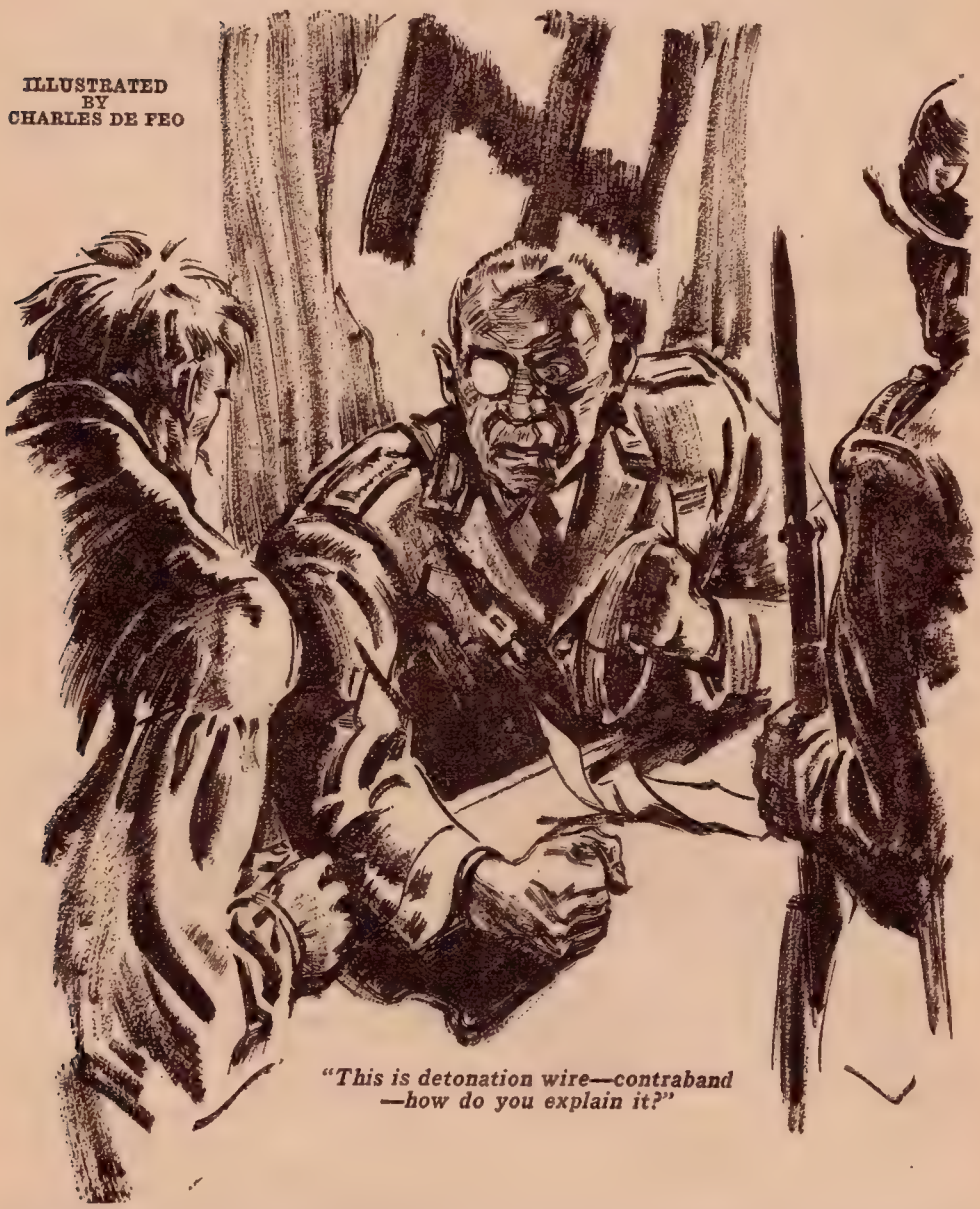


"This is detonation wire—contraband —how do you explain it?"

BEHIND the fierce white light, deep in the shadows, the inexorable voice went on and on, sometimes in monotone, sometimes sharply, but always questioning. It rang all shades and meanings, now soft, now hard, now cajoling, now threatening, but forever probing.

Four times a day, every day since they had taken him, it had gone on.

Now the voice was patience itself. "Don't be a fool, Rennert," it said. "A little information for your life. Is that asking so much?"

The prisoner slumped wearily on the stool. The guards on either side straight-

ened him up with their rifle butts. He leaned forward, seeking the owner of the voice behind the fierceness of the glare. But the flaring whiteness was too much; it seemed to scorch his very eyeballs.

"Just a little information, Rennert," the voice wheedled.

"I have none to give."

"Is your life worth nothing to you?"

"Nothing! Have done and shoot me!"

"We do not shoot so quickly, Rennert."

"I swear I have nothing to tell you."

"But you admit you were near the bridge when it was blown up?"

"Yes."

"Did you help blow it up?"

"No. I have told you no, and no, and no! A thousand times. I do not sleep well; I was taking a walk—"

"But, Herr Rennert"—the voice was almost apologetic—"it was after curfew."

His tongue was so swollen. If only they would give him a little water. But he knew better than to ask. Yesterday, or was it the day before, they had let him get the cup almost to his lips before knocking it out of his hand. And he had cried, shamelessly. He would not ask again.

"I said, Rennert, that it was after curfew," the voice was sharper now.

"Yes! It was after curfew. Yes, I was in a forbidden part of town. Yes, I am French. I have answered this again and again. Have done. Do what you will."

"Not so quickly, Rennert. That coil of copper wire we found on you. How do you explain that?"

The white-hot light seemed to smash past his eyeballs and sear through his brain. "I have told you and told you. I am a dentist. I buy the wire and melt it down for inlays. It is the best we can do."

"But it was detonation wire. Contraband. How do you explain that?"

"I don't explain it. The man I bought it from didn't say."

"This man's name?"

"I don't know; I don't know! How many times must I say it?"

One of the guards raised his rifle and smashed the steel butt hard against his temple. Living fire ran through his head. The whole side of his face went numb.

"I ordered that, Herr Rennert," the voice was remote, unconcerned. "It was to teach you better manners."

The numbness spread across the front of his face. The fierce light was dimming. There were shadows before his eyes. Had they lowered the light, half shut it off? But no, it couldn't be. Always before the light had been snapped off sharply. His eyes burned; pain shot through his head. He slumped from the stool to the floor. Then darkness was all about him and he fainted away.

A BIRD was singing at the cell window, but he could only hear it. He could feel the roughness of the wall with his hand, but he could not see it. He was blind. Blind! He had known it for hours, had told it to himself again and again, but his brain refused to grasp the utter blackness that wrapped it round. There were people in his cell now. He could hear them moving about. A hand fell on his face; fingers lifted his eyelids. A strange voice said, "He is blind. I will stake my reputation on it."

Then the hateful voice answered: "It must have been the blow. "

The fingers lifted the lids again; the professional voice said, "I do not have to tell you, my man. You know already?"

He nodded at the darkness above him and the fingers left his face.

"Turn him loose tonight," the hateful voice ordered. "It is useless even to feed him now. We learned nothing from him"—the voice laughed—"except that he was a dentist."

The day was one of horror, of terrible blackness, of despair and the slow creeping away of the hours. It could have been day or night, fog or sunlight, when the gates clanged shut behind him. They had given him a stick and thrust him forth into the streets, streets that he had once known like the palm of his own hand, streets now peopled with terror and fearsome sounds. Slowly he tapped his way along, a stranger in a strange world.

It took him hours to make his way home. At last a hand touched his elbow and a harsh familiar voice said in his ear, "It is I, Monsieur Rennert, your con-

cierge." And the vision of the gnarled old woman who guarded the depths of the lower staircase swept into his head.

"My wife?" he asked, and his whole soul awaited the answer.

"She is gone. They took her the same day. She has not returned."

His hand trembled, then was quiet. "The stairs, you will help me?"

"It is useless to go up. They smashed everything." A hand grasped his elbow. "Come, you shall stay with me until you are accustomed to your—your new state."

HE LAY for days, unable to sleep, on the cot behind the stove, listening to the harsh grumbling of the old woman, to her voice raised in loud lamentation at this fate which forced her to feed and take care of a helpless man when there was not enough food for the able-bodied. Four times a day the patrol looked in, and then her voice was loud and vituperous cursing him and her misfortune. He accepted her abuse as he accepted all else. It was necessary. The very walls had ears.

Then on the seventh day after his return, for the first time, the patrol did not stop in. That was the day the old woman brought him the sign.

"What is it?" he asked.

"A sign," said the old woman. "Here, hang it about your neck."

His fingers fluttered over it. "What does it say?"

"It says, 'Please help me, I am blind'." His fingers came instantly away. The woman said loudly, "I can no longer afford to support you in idleness. You must go down to the railway station and beg. Come—I will help you to dress." She helped him into his coat. "Wait," she said. "You must have a hat. What is a blind beggar without a hat to catch the pennies in, hah? Here, put this one on."

He tried it on and said, "It hurts. It's too small for me."

"You must wear it. It is necessary. Do you understand?"

"I understand," he said. "Say no more." He put the hat on his head and she led him down the hallway. But before she opened the street door, she put her lips close to his ear and whispered, "God go with you, Monsieur Rennert."

To a blind man the station was a place of utter confusion: the dragon's hiss of the locomotives; the cymbal crash of shifting cars; the rumble of the trucks and the hurried passing of thousands of unknown feet. Terror was in Rennert's heart as he edged his way along the platform. Fear tore at him as he lowered himself to the planking. The noise and the blackness were inside him as he took the hat from his head and placed it in his lap.

An hour went by. Occasionally he heard a coin drop in his hat. Then he would murmur up into the blackness, "Thank you, sir; God bless you." Then he heard the clanging of the train, felt the soft steam against his face, heard the running feet of the porters. He turned his blank eyes toward the runway. Hurrying feet started going by him. His ears, quicker now than of old, caught the sound of halting steps. A coin fell in the hat. He lifted his face and gave his stereotyped blessing.

After a moment a nervous, agitated voice asked, "Will you never see again, my man?"

Good, he thought. Everything so far was according to order. He answered, "Some day I will see again."

The agitated voice said one word—"When?"

This man was obviously nervous, but still it went according to order.

The blind man said, "I will see again when the sun rises in the west."

He could feel the man stooping. "Quickly!" said the nervous voice. "Where is it?"

"In the hat. Lift the sweatband."

He felt fingers fumbling at the hat. This was a young man, and nervous.

The blind man said, "You have it? Yes? Slip in into the lining of your coat. If they take you, you never saw me. You don't know me. You know no one. You bought it from a contraband dealer. You melt it down for inlays. You are a dentist, understand?"

"But I know little of dentistry. I was just a student." The young voice was

(Continued on page 123)

Bill clamped his yellow teeth on the trapper's shin in a mouth-filling, bone-gritting bite.

SLAPTAIL BILL

By

MONTGOMERY M. ATWATER

ON a grassy bank several feet above the surface of his dam, Slaptail Bill, the giant beaver, crouched in agony and exhaustion. For hours he had fought the steel thing that gripped him by one hind leg. He had splintered his big yellow teeth vainly on the metal and his blood spotted it. His leg, swollen and wrenched from twisting, was mercifully numb, now that he had given up.

All around him lay an almost impassable tangle of willows growing out of the water of his dam. Above and below him, each behind its cunningly built rampart of sticks and mud and grass, were other dams, bewilderingly alike. Except for the whisper of water feeling its way down from one level to the next, it was utterly quiet and Slaptail Bill was alone. It was a curiously peaceful scene, the sunlit water unbroken by any ripple. One would have said that here in his watery citadel no tragedy could come to the old beaver and his kind, no violence stalk him. Yet the torn circle of ground about him proved that violence had penetrated. The very quiet was proof that tragedy was everywhere.

It was too quiet and Bill was too much alone. With the patriarch of the colony apparently out sunning himself on a May morning, square, chocolate-brown heads should have been crisscrossing the pools, each at the apex of its V of ripples. There should have been the slither of wet, furry bodies climbing the dams, the mewing cries of the kits playing with each other and the chiseling of yellow teeth in soft wood.

Slaptail Bill was the last survivor of a massacre that only a human predator could have contrived. Here and there a member of his tribe lay in the farthest corner of a den waiting for the slow healing of a leg or foot amputated by a trap. But they were the crippled remnants of the once thriving colony. All the others were gone. Their naked carcasses, stripped of glossy fur and flung into the brush, rotted everywhere—Bill's children and his children's children.

Sorrow and anger are abstractions. Who can say whether or not Bill experienced them or comprehended the depth of the disaster? But in his own pragmatic way he had intelligence and imagination. He knew the meaning of the light clash of metal which now sounded in the brush. His enemy was coming. Yet he did not renew his struggle to escape or try to hide. Perhaps he realized that either would be futile. Stoically he waited for death, not even raising his head when the shadow of a trapper fell across his back and the taint of man insulted his nostrils. He did not know that the trap had sprung poorly, catching him only by the toes, that only a shred of flesh still held him.

The trapper did not realize it either. This animal, sick with pain and exhaustion, represented triumph to him. He made delighted noises, for Slaptail Bill was no ordinary catch. He was a giant of his kind and instead of the usual brown fur shading to gray over his belly, he was pure glistening black, guard hairs and underfur, from nose tip to the root of his rubbery tail.

BILL hissed through his nose, his sole vocal means of expressing defiance. The man laughed and prodded him in the ribs with his club. Perhaps it was only a final explosion of energy and fear, a last instinctive attempt to reach the safety of water. Perhaps, too, it was the careless insult of the trapper's act, for Bill was the embodiment of self-respect. In any case, unexpectedly, hissing like a small steam engine, the old beaver charged. The trap's hold broke and Bill, his eyes closed, his legs churning, clamped his yellow teeth on the trapper's shin in a mouth-filling, bone-gritting bite.

The trapper uttered a yell of surprise and pain. Knocked off balance by the

momentum of Bill's seventy-pound body, he tottered grotesquely on the edge of the pond, flailing the air with his arms. When he fell in he dragged the beaver after him, still fastened grimly to his leg.

The old fellow could have drowned his enemy then; he had the weight and strength and watercraft. But Slaptail Bill lacked the instinct of a killer. Under water he released the man's leg, dove deep and swam far. It would have taken observation more keen and alert than any human's to see him when just his eyes and the tip of his nose broke surface again upstream in the dappled gloom of the overhanging willows. He traveled the length of the pool quickly but without a sound or a ripple. Behind him the splashing and cursing of the trapper was already faint.

Puffing a little and dragging his injured leg, Bill hoisted his heavy, shapeless body up the face of the next dam. By the time the trapper had floundered back onto land again, Slaptail Bill was a quarter of a mile away, still traveling determinedly upstream. If he felt pleased at having defeated his enemy or any regret at leaving the home where he had lived all his years, he did not show it. He never stopped and he never looked back as he departed from his ravished empire.

It was different with the man, who allowed his rage and disappointment to warp his judgment. All day he prowled through the willows and along the banks. He pulled Bill's lodge to pieces and even cut his dam so that he could pry into every bank den with long sticks. Finally he went off downstream, the likeliest avenue of escape, looking for the bloody tracks a wounded beaver should leave behind. Even to him, who considered that he knew the habits of beaver well, the idea did not occur that the half-crippled animal might flee into the mountains.

By then Slaptail Bill was already far up the canyon where the icy little mountain stream plunged down from the snowfields in a series of cascades and rapids. He had gone beyond the last dam and except for his paddle tail he might have been a cub bear as he lumbered through the shallows. Incredibly active and graceful in the water, he was ludicrous on land. He walked pigeon-toed, his tail rasping dryly over the gravel. He was higher behind than in front and not high enough at that, for he had to hump his back to keep his fat stomach from dragging.

He seemed to travel without attempt at concealment or precaution. But that was because he put no reliance on his eyes. His keen nose and ears were always at work and actually he progressed in a series of dashes from the comparative safety of one pool to the next. Often he lay still for minutes, so still that he looked like a boulder darker than the rest. Accustomed all his life to the humid gloom of his burrows and dens, the light and heat of day were suffocating to him and his leg hurt savagely. What deep inner urge drove him forward on this desperate pilgrimage no one can tell. He could have returned downstream where larger waters would have offered him protection in his quest. But, unhesitatingly, he chose to go up, into dangers and difficulties beyond human experience.

EVERY meat eater of the wilderness ravened for his flesh. He left a bloody, musky trail as plain to their noses as a highway. Out of his element, he was pitifully lacking in defensive weapons for all his weight and strength. Awkward, slow-moving and nearsighted, even a coyote pup could tear him to pieces. Yet he waddled steadily on like a rheumatic old soldier bound to show the young upstarts he could march with any of them.

Noon of that spring day found him with a tedious mile and a thousand feet of elevation behind him. As calmly as if he were at home he selected one particular branch out of a willow clump growing beside the stream, cut it off with two neat chisel strokes of his teeth and retired with it under a cutbank. The air was shady and cool, damp with spray from a cascade just above. He snipped the willow into convenient lengths and peeled the bark from each, manipulating the sticks in his forepaws like a man

eating an ear of corn. His hunger satisfied, he folded his tail under him and went to sleep, sprawling open-mouthed and without dignity, like a fat man taking a siesta.

At dusk he woke, ate another willow and combed his fur, a ritual which preceded almost any undertaking. He was ready to travel again in the grateful chill of evening. But the cascade, twenty feet of slippery, almost perpendicular rock, barred his path. It seemed an insuperable obstacle. Three times, Slaptail Bill huffed and scrambled part way up only to flounder ignominiously back into the pool. Matter-of-factly, then, he deserted the stream entirely and circled the falls overland, making enough racket in the brush for an elk. No doubt that is what the lynx passing downwind thought it was.

It took Bill most of the night to complete his detour which was rough and involved a great deal of scrambling over rockpiles which bruised his feet. When he reached the water again he lay in it a long time, drinking and gasping. His stubby legs had never been designed for such exercise. A coyote whiffed him there, faintly, but the gray assassin's muzzle was decorated with fresh grouse feathers and far off across the canyons his ladylove called him to a serenade.

The third day found Bill stumping lopsidedly up the water course which now barely wet his feet. It ended where a spring bubbled out from under a huge boulder. Above him, if Bill could have seen it, loomed a thousand feet of rocky, precipitous slope. He dined heartily, as if realizing that the most difficult part of his ordeal was at hand. He pulled up handfuls of the soft, swampy grass near the spring, eating the tender roots while the alpine marmots whistled at him in amazement.

From a tremendous height an eagle swooped on him with a shrill whine of wings, then rocketed up again realizing that his seventy pounds were more than she could manage. On that desolate mountainside, no other living creatures saw him, which was fortunate for Bill. Instinct, that mysterious power to which we ascribe all such matters we cannot understand, told him that somewhere the land must cease to climb, must tilt downward again to other streams and strange valleys.

He reached the divide that night, the icy wind from the peaks ruffling his fur and the air thin and tasteless in his lungs. Sorefooted, weary, his tail rubbed raw, he paused to contemplate his achievement. Perhaps in sheer bravado, perhaps because he was hungry, he took two big bites out of a scrub pine, a mark to make any wilderness-wise traveler halt and stare.

Moving more swiftly now with the pull of gravity to aid him, Bill waddled down across the rock slides, across the alpine meadows and at last into the timber again. He wet his parched mouth at a dingy snowdrift and rested there a while chiseling his teeth, one set against another. A grizzly, glimpsing him from a distance, mistook the sound for the dry clatter of porcupine quills and went his way, ravenous from hibernation. Bill ate nothing. The dehydration of his body was far advanced. Unless he could find water, and before the heat of another day, he would die. His bones, scattered and gnawed by coyote, mountain rat and squirrel would whiten there to amaze some hunter in after years.

He was more than half dead now. All his bodily chemistry was breaking down from lack of moisture. He moved sluggishly, dragging himself along like a man on hands and knees, scarcely a hundred feet an hour. But time meant nothing to him and in enough hours the distance mounted. Instinct—or was it the shape of the land subtly guiding his tired feet—led him at last to a spring on the opposite side of the mountain.

THREE days later he reached the floor of a wild and isolated canyon. He was a caricature of the sleek and portly animal that had started. His fur was brittle and dusty, worn to the hide on his belly. His skin hung limply from his hips and spine like an ill-fitting garment. His round, good-natured face had shrunk, leaving his big chisel teeth exposed, and his trail was outlined in drops of blood. But he had put a mountain between him and his enemy.

Recuperation was a slow process. For weeks he did little in his new valley, even after food and rest had once more filled out his sides and the healing water had cured his wounds. The characteristic industry of his race seemed to have deserted him and he lived like a tramp, never two nights in the same place. For several miles he explored his stream, roosting under cutbanks and log jams when day caught him. It was as if he were grieving and could not nerve himself for the serious work of constructing a new home. Thus, unhurried, contemplative and sober, he lazed the summer away.

In late August a violent little thunderstorm congealed to snow at this altitude. The thin film still lay on the grass and delicately highlighted each willow when he came out of his den at evening. That night a skin of ice formed on every quiet pool.

The hint of winter storms to come seemed to rouse Bill out of his lethargy. That very day he began the construction of a dam. Apparently he had not been entirely unobservant, for the site was at a distance and he moved to it unhesitatingly. To the human eye there was no reason to choose this place over another. Perhaps it was the merest whim on Bill's part, or the fact that a tree, undercut by the torrents of spring, had fallen across the stream and offered him a ready-made foundation.

Haphazardly chosen or not, as the dam grew and water backed up, it was plain that the fall of the land was gentle here. The pond soon inundated an acre of willow clumps and reached out one long arm toward a grove of quaking aspens, that delicacy of the beaver clan. He deepened and lengthened the channel, using the mud and stones to chink his dam, until he could transport the silvery logs entirely by water. Jammed into the banks in the deepest part of the pond, they soon lost their buoyancy and became the nucleus of his winter food store.

Bill seemed to work unsystematically, dragging trees in his teeth and dollops of mud clasped under his chin. Yet the dam rose evenly and the water from the start flowed smoothly over its crest. Successively he had flooded himself out of one temporary home after another. Now, beginning at the deepest hole in his pond, near the feed pile, he excavated several tunnels into the bank. There, approachable only under water, with the roots of a pine to form the roof, he hollowed out a chamber. It had two levels, one close to the mouth of the main tunnel where he could let the water drain out of his fur. The higher level he padded with an absorbent mattress of slivers torn off willow wands. Thus he prepared for winter, completing his storehouse of aspen and willow branches well before the first severe storm blanketed the valley.

Through the cold months, Bill lay warm and snug, according to his standards. Ice locked his pond and snow covered it. Frost crept into the ground and all the roots above him were festooned with crystals from his condensing breath. But he could not see them. In his burrow it was utterly dark; no sound reached his ears except perhaps the stirring of his own organs. The damp cold did not penetrate his fur and the layers of fat beneath.

A great deal of the time he dozed or slept, dreaming who knows what dreams of winters when his colony was numerous, when his house rustled to the movement and breathing of his kindred. Wakening in the changeless dark, he swam through his tunnel to the food pile, wrenched out a length of aspen or willow and brought it back to eat slowly, rolling each morsel over his tongue. The bare sticks he took out with him and released under the ice.

IF THE winter was long or short, mild or severe, he neither knew nor cared. But at last when he visited his storehouse the stronger illumination filtering down through the ice told him that the snow was melting. He thrust his jaws experimentally against a brighter spot and the rotten ice gave way. For the first time in months, his shoebutton eyes regarded the outside world. Tall banks of snow overhung the stream, falling sheer to the water's edge. The frozen willows, buried to their necks in it, flamed red against the glittering background. But

the sun had been at work on them. At their tips were the glossy buds of pussy-willow.

The sap was running in them. Bill chiseled his teeth, thinking of their rich taste after the waterlogged fare of his storehouse. He wriggled his nose, sampling the breeze which blew strongly up the canyon, and it was clean. He listened and there was no sound.

How could there be when the man stood so still?

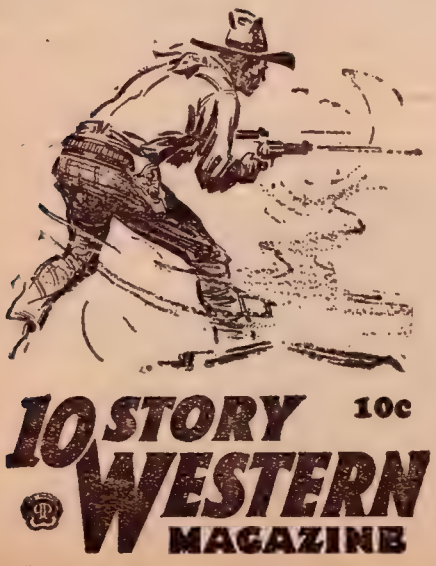
Though accident brought the trapper here at the moment when Bill ventured out for the first time, it was not his first visit to the old beaver's new home. Before winter even, he had puzzled out the course of Bill's pilgrimage. According to his peculiar philosophy, he had a score to settle with the old fellow and was reminded of his feud every time the livid scars on his leg ached in the cold. But he had a predator's long patience and had waited for his revenge until the beaver's pelt was prime again.

Totally unaware of his danger, Bill rimmed out the airhole wide enough to accommodate his rotund body and chinned himself onto the ice with much scratching of claws and splashing of water. He waddled over to the bank and reached vainly for the willow stems above his head. Failure seemed to make him petulant, for he stamped and breathed hard through his nose. The trapper could have shot him there. But this meeting was unexpected. His rifle lay across his shoulders in its sling, over his pack. He could not get at it without moving and Bill's eyes would catch any motion. He waited.

Balked in his first attempt to get at the tasty willows, the old beaver folded his tail under him and squatted on it in the freezing slush. He appeared to be contemplating the problem. Presently he reared up on his hindquarters and began to comb his fur. He was in no hurry either; the sun was pleasant on his back. Reaching as far behind his head as he could, he brought his paws around and down his chest and his fat stomach to the root of his tail.

Under his ministrations, his gorgeous black pelt began to glow. Yet vanity was far from being the reason for such a careful toilet. At each sweep, Bill's paws picked up a little oil from the glands at the base of his tail and spread it through his fur. He was waterproofing himself. Anyone with a spark of humor in his soul must have laughed aloud. Slaptail Bill was in such dead earnest as he tried to make his stubby arms reach just one more inch across his back, as he grunted with satisfaction while his fingers relieved the accumulated itch of months.

But the trapper was not a laughing



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Be sure to read Joe Austell Small's great new novel, "Gallows Graduate," an actionful epic of a hard-to-kill range-saviour whose life began at the end of a cottonwood noose, in the big April issue. Other memorable long stories this month are "Rawhide and Dynamite" by Art Lawson, "Battalion of Death" by William R. Cox, "Trouble-Shooter's Last Draw" by M. Howard Lane, and "Night of the Red Snow" by Tom Roan—winners all!

On sale today!

man. His eyes translated Bill's pelt into whiskey and women. His mind thought only of stratagems to make sure of ripping it from Bill's body.

At last the big beaver was satisfied. The combing, apparently, had stimulated thought. Without hesitation he waddled across the ice and began to tunnel up through the snow bank toward the nearest clump of willows. His surveying instinct was good, for he broke through the crust at exactly the right spot. It was also only a couple of yards from the trapper's feet and the enemy was now between him and the water.

Bill snipped off a willow and began to gobble the succulent twigs. Behind him, the trapper shifted his weight and position a fraction of an inch at a time. It was all over with Bill now. The man didn't need his rifle. The staff in his hand would do the work as effectively as a bullet and spoil less fur. He jumped hard onto Bill's tunnel, caving it in.

THE man's leap seemed to release all the hated odors of humanity in Bill's nostrils. But his were not the instant reactions of a meat eater. It took him a second or two to realize that he was trapped. He blew ferociously through his nose and backed into the willow clump, peering at his enemy like a prize-fighter whose eyes are bruised and dim.

The old fellow's bewilderment and indecision tickled what humor the trapper had. He laughed. Remembering how Bill had ducked him once, he could not resist the impulse to torture. He rapped the huge beaver smartly on the back.

The old beaver ground his teeth and gathered his legs under him. His intention was painfully evident and the man awaited his charge with club poised, not to be taken by surprise a second time. Yet, when it came, Bill's rush was startling in its suddenness and determination. He backed it up with seventy muscular pounds and a rain of blows from the club did not turn him. The trapper struck hard but inaccurately and with snowshoes bound to his feet could not shift position readily. Bill's body thudded into his legs; Bill's yellow teeth dove once more into his flesh.

A yell burst from the trapper's mouth. He tried to throw himself back and away and lost his balance. For a moment he teetered on the snowbank; then his pack pulled him on over. He hit hard on the ice, head first, and broke through. Gradually his body slid into the black water until only his snowshoes were visible, crosswise of the hole in the ice. A great many bubbles came to the surface but the snowshoes never moved.

Up on the bank Bill felt his bruises tenderly and breathed defiance through his nose. He couldn't understand how his enemy sight, sound and smell, had disappeared so suddenly and completely. Presently he scrambled down the bank and dove into his airhole. Practical to the last, he carried a fresh willow with him.

ILLUSTRATED
BY
LYNN BOGUE HUNT

THE CAMP-FIRE

Where readers, writers and adventurers meet

IT'S a long time between drinks, as North Carolina's gubernatorial luminary, John Motley Morehead, is reported to have remarked to his South Carolinian confrère, James H. Hammond.

The record is not clear as to whether either gentleman had ever visited the Temple of Juno Tavern prior to their historic conversation in the mid-forties. However, all evidence points to the contrary, although, we hazard a guess, either governor would have proved a distinct social adjunct to that tight little circle of bibulous cognoscenti which formed the Philo Christomatheon Literary Society of Tannachar.

The author of "For Drinking Men Only!"—a teetotaler, we are informed on good authority—asserts, and we are inclined to uphold him, that while the heyday of the tavern and the careers of Hammond and Morehead were contemporaneous, the chances are that the two governors never leaned against that fabulous bar. He bases his assertion on what we agree to be a highly reasonable deduction. *Viz.*, that if they had ever imbibed there, the famous remark could never have been uttered.

As for ourselves, partial as we are to the vitamin-crammed juices of the citrus fruit alone, we cannot bring to the discussion more than the impersonal interest of the uninitiate.

We were unable to reach the author in time to get from him the usual bits of personal introductory material which we like to include here in *Camp-Fire* whenever a new name appears on our contents page.

Fortuitously, however, one James Niblock, who claims to know Mr. Downie well, passes along to us the following paragraphs snitched from a volume of aphorisms in process of compilation by his talented friend—

> One of the worst things you can say about drinking is that it is silly, because there is no possible rebuttal. About all that can be said in favor of alcohol taken through the teeth is that it sometimes produces some laughable comedy. Against that, however, you must set off that most people are funnier sober than drunk, although a shot or two of Old Whiffletree Rye will often help them to enter into the spirit of the joke.
>
> It is hard to get anybody to say a good word for whiskey. They don't even recommend it anymore for snakebite. From now on if you get stung by a rattler or copperhead it's just sheer hard luck. Some doctors say a beaker of cold buttermilk will do a person more good under any imaginable conditions.
>
> Personally, I am in favor of Prohibition; but if we ever try the Noble Experiment again I want to see buttermilk placed under the curse along with all other harmful and revolting tipples. I

am against buttermilk! If I were to say that I can take buttermilk or leave it alone I'd be lying. I can't take it at all. I have no quarrel, in general, with the assertion that what a man drinks, in moderation and under proper legal regulations, is his own business; but I make an exception of buttermilk. We had it at home, I know—when I was a boy on the farm. I've seen my father and my old grandaddy swig it down like water. And when the preacher came on a pastoral call I've seen my old Grandma, as fine and God-fearing an old lady as you would meet in a day's travel, bring up a three-quart pitcher of the stuff and there he'd sit and drink until chalk-water tears were running down his whiskers. They even tried to get me to drink some of it. Not maliciously, of course, and not thinking that I'd come to any harm by it. Everybody drank buttermlk in those days. They even gave it to babies in their nursing bottles. . . . But I wouldn't take it. Something warned me that if I ever acquired a taste for that pickled spoojoo it would be the ruination of me. . . . I don't think anybody should be allowed to drink it!

MONTGOMERY M. ATWATER, the second recruit of six who join the ranks of our Writers' Brigade this month, introduces himself thuswise—

I've spent most of my life in the Rocky Mountains as a guide, trapper, hunter and forester. I've always had a great admiration for Bill Beaver, that model of industry and of how to mind one's own business. Like most stories, this one about Bill has a germ of fact to start it off. I met an enormous old beaver high on a ridge and far from water. The story grew from trying to put myself in his place and decide what might have driven him to such a hazardous journey.

I'm a skier of some note in my own backyard and made the three hundred mile trip through the South Fork of the Flathead Primitive Area in Northern Montana, the first time it was done on skis. Uncle Sam is now training me for his skitroops, which should be the most exciting hunting of all when we move to Alaska, Siberia, Norway or wherever it's to be.

But I'll be glad when the show is over and I can get back to my own mountains. There is a lake up in the Flathead country, a virgin lake high up under the peaks. I helped get the first fish in it that ever swam there. They were eyed eggs really and I carried them the last ten miles and three thousand feet on my back. I have a date at that lake five years from the day those eggs started to hatch before my eyes as I put them into the water. . .

Incidentally, we checked with Artist Lynn Bogue Hunt, who illustrated "Slaptail Bill" for us, about the size of those furred construction engineers of the wilderness, and he tells us that official statistics record a beaver of 110 pounds, more than a third again the size of Bill, as the largest ever noted! The record beaver is mentioned in a pamphlet by Vernon Bailey issued by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. It was a female measuring more than 42 inches and was found near Ashland, Wisconsin. Can you top that, any of you hunting-and-trapping *Camp-Fire* comrades?

WILLIAM P. SCHRAMM, who gives us the unbelievable account of Andy Bahr's icy trek on page 56, managed to cram plenty of travel and activity into his own life before "going back to the farm." He writes—

Spent my boyhood on a Minnesota farm. Was the only kid—badly spoiled, naturally. Received all my education in the little white schoolhouse still in use on the farm's N. W. corner.

Left farm at 18 and started seeing the world. Sold my first yarn at 19. Once stood in line with David Wark Griffith peddling scenarios at the old Biograph Studios. Sold one—a Western.

Chummed with the late Frederick O'Brien in Tahiti. (Remember his gorgeous "Mystic Isle of the South Seas," "White Shadows in the South Seas," and "Atolls of the Sun?") One day outran him in the Tahitian wilds to escape capture by an over-amorous Amazonian belle bent on procuring a husband cave-man style. Fred didn't fare so well. He was seized and lost his shirt in the struggle.

Once went to Hollywood with the ambition to become a high-salaried continuity writer and marry a movie star. Did a bit of the first and failed dismally at the last. Married a farmer's daughter instead and finally settled down on the old homestead again, and have never regretted it—much. Now managing the old farm by working 18 hours a day,

Sundays included, producing for Victory. From about November 1st—when corn husking winds up the last busy season—until April 1st nearly all time is my own, when I write articles and fiction. Am known for miles as the writin' farmer—my only fame so far. Oh, yes, I raise German shepherds and breed rare chickens, for a hobby.

Last but hardly least, I consider Andy Bahr the most interesting fellow-being I ever encountered. Met the old guy in Ottawa where he came after the epochal deer drive. Wanted to show him the town. Soon found out he wasn't interested a whit—he wanted to linger in a cafe over a juicy steak and talk ceaselessly about the drive's hardships. He got it his way, and hence came to me much of the reindeer story.

We wrote the author and asked if he knew what had become of the famous reindeer herd; what its current status was, if any; whether it had flourished and multiplied or died or been slaughtered off. He confesses to not being posted but has promised to make some inquiries.

We're curious to know and would appreciate a line from any reader who may have information about it.

BEN MERSON is a newspaperman (rewrite, New York *Journal-American)* whose work has appeared in various magazines including *Esquire, This Week* and the *American Weekly.*

About "The Anchor from Murmansk" he says—

My purpose in tackling the yarn was to do a non-formula short story—a risky experiment when one writes for money—and from a strictly business point of view the whole idea seemed slightly nutty. The yarn required a great deal of research, confirmation from Naval sources (and they're suspicious gents), and then the sweat-and-sit job of getting it down on paper. But the result, much to my surprise, seemed to jell. Am laboring currently on a biography of Saladin and when I get it off the slate I hope to try you again with something.

We hope so, too, and in the meantime, how's for letting us see a chapter from "Saladin"? There was a character whose name spelled *Adventure* in any language!

WE'D no sooner bought "Contraband" from Howard Maier's agent and called up to see what we could learn about the author when news came, as it has lately about so many of our writers, that he was in uniform and out of reach of inquisitive editors. About all we've been able to find out about the guy is that he's a technical sergeant in the army, flew to Guadalcanal and back after spending only one week there on whatever mission it was that took him, and is now stationed at Duncan Field in San Antonio where he runs the camp paper. He has a contract with a publisher to do a book on the "Susy Q"—Hardison's Flying Fortress, you'll recall—and hopes to squeeze out time to fulfill it if he can cut his working day down a mite from its present mere 14 hours.

DAVID KEITH-NEWELL, our final recruit this month, is over-modest, we think, in introducing himself so sketchily. He says—

Most writers I've read about all seem to have shot polar bears in Kodiak or trotted around over Africa in Safaris. Hell, I ain't done anything as exciting as that. I've done a lot of wandering since I strayed from my father's ranch in Texas. Been from Ketchican to Shanghai and from Culebra to Colombia but except for some 32 professional fights as a middleweight, have found life pleasant and dreamy. A great deal of it has been spent in Old and New Mexico and Arizona and Texas and Colorado working cattle and breaking horses by contract. I've broken some 600 head in my life. Have done some rodeo riding and roping, a little bulldogging. I use a candalle (horn knot) and a low down roping saddle both for regular work and for bronc breaking. A pore clumsy little bronc fell on me two years ago last fall and broke my neck, but I'm all right now—I've busted out more ponies since. I also speak Spanish and my wife says I look like Porcupinio Chavez.

We happen to know that among other things Dave has served in the Marine Corps (that was the Shanghai episode), has operated dude ranches in the West and is currently engaged on an army construction job in Colorado. And the guy's not thirty yet! Well, maybe when he gets

a little older he'll really get around places and do something.

OF HIS two-part story which opens our magazine this month E. Hoffmann Price says—

> Lest you think I am going hog wild in the imagination I wish to assure all concerned or interested that each screwball character in "Last Boat from Zamboanga," while admittedly fictitious, is based on some actual eccentric, living or dead. Years ago, near Parang, there was a sunshiner called Crazy Tom, an ex-soldier. He actually did have four native wives; and instead of building one big shack, he had four shacks, a day's march apart. This detail convinced me that Tom was not crazy! For the rest, he earned enough as a market hunter to get stinking drunk at regular intervals, beat the tar out of whichever wife was handiest, and then, sobering up, he'd buy the gal red calico and gewgaws and all would be well.
>
> And there was, in Mindanao, an officer who, being somewhat in disfavor, got a jungle assignment which was virtually exile. Pending his finally being relieved of that unpleasant detail, he amused himself by organizing a navy, and importing lamp posts, very much as our "Datu" Ryan did. So, Ryan is a blend of several actual characters, with touches distinctly his own.
>
> Finally, there is a factual basis for our Bishop Jackson; although the original was, and perhaps to this day is preaching in the Mountain Province of Luzon. His teachings quickly resulted in a diminution of head hunting. The big black ex-soldier set out to finish with a Bible the job which had been started with the Krag; the tough mountaineers listened to him, and accepted him, recognizing his sincerity and respecting his solid character.
>
> All in all, Mindanao was, and probably to this day is, jammed with as many eccentrics and individualists per square mile than any comparable area on earth.

Reminiscing in a personal letter not long ago Author Price recalls that it was Douglas MacArthur who personally signed his discharge from the 15th Cavalry. Price's first hitch in the army was served in the Philippines, you'll remember.

The illustrations in this issue for "Last Boat from Zamboanga" are the last we shall see with the familiar **I B H** down in the corner.

Isaac Brewster Hazelton died suddenly from a heart attack the afternoon of January 26. He was on his way home to Nutley, New Jersey from New York City and passed away en route.

Born seventy years ago in Boston, Mr. Hazelton was educated at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He taught art at the Rhode Island Institute of Art in Providence and was later a staff artist for the George Batten advertising agency in New York before turning to free-lance work. An artist of varied talents and great versatility he is known for his advertising work, magazine and book illustration and portraiture. In the first category he will be remembered by many people for the "Clicquot Kid"—the laughing Esquimau youngster he created to advertise Clicquot Club ginger ale for so many years. The last few years he devoted most of his time to magazine illustration and juvenile books but about a year ago he did a remarkable series of color ads for Willys-Overland depicting the mechanized war equipment the company is now manufacturing. These stirring pictures of jeeps, tanks, scout cars and so on were widely reproduced.

We saw Mr. Hazelton for the last time after lunch at the Technology Club on the day he died. We talked with him about forthcoming work he had promised to do for this magazine with which he had been associated for so many years and he left us bubbling over with enthusiastic ideas for a new African jungle series he was anxious to get going on. The shock of his passing leaves a gap in the pages of *Adventure* that will not be filled easily and we mourn him as a friend as well as a staff associate, and extend our deepest sympathy to his family.

COLONEL GEORGE VICKERS, Chaplain, U.S.A. writes from the army headquarters in India where he is currently stationed that he was so impressed by Mrs. Lawrence's "Prayer for Airmen" which appeared in our November issue that he sent copies to both General Chennault and General Haynes, who command American fighting planes in that theater. He is also having copies of the poem printed to distribute to all his chaplains for distribution among the flyers, suggesting that one be pasted somewhere inside every plane. *Adventure* is pretty proud at the thought that a part of it will go along with every bomber that takes off from one of our most important bases.

* * *

And we are informed that "—And So Will They," Mrs. Jacobs' poem in the October issue, is being used in History and Civics classes in the N.Y. public Schools. And we have had more than one request from newspapers around the country for permission to reprint it.

ADD BOOK NOTES: Carl D. Lane has just had published a 600 page volume that ought to be on the shelf of anybody interested in boats and the sea. It's about as comprehensive and definitive a handbook as could be well imagined, chock full of explanatory drawings and diagrams by the author. "The Boatman's Manual" is the title of this nautical encyclopedia in miniature. Boat handling, seamanship, piloting and navigation, safety, boat maintenance, customs and etiquette are only drops in the bucket of all it holds. *(W. W. Norton & Co. $3.50)*

Author Lane has been absent from our pages far too long but returns next month with "Serpent Ship," an account of the first steamboat to navigate the Missouri River.

ERNEST O. HAUSER, whose "Shanghai Post-Mortem" concluded in our March issue, writes from Chungking, the capital of Free China where he is now stationed as a foreign correspondent—

> A new two-story building has just been added to the Press Hostel here and I'll move in soon. Not a nail in it—just mud and bamboo all tied together with string. But it'll be better than the place I've been holing in where a night without bedbugs is phenomenal and the rats chew all night, every night, above the ceiling of paper and straw mats. Weather here is crazy—wet and clouded and cold; then suddenly blue sky and hot. This province of Szechuan is beautiful and I am trying to get out of Chungking as much as possible to see more of it. Have had one trip to the front but got flu on the way back—high fever—in a filthy small town. Feeling fine again now.

He wound up his letter by asking for quinine pills, vitamin pills and a copy of Roget's Thesaurus! Medicines—both internal and cultural—have been duly forwarded, we hasten to report.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL FRANK W. EBEY just walked in to say hello. A major when he left nine weeks ago for assignment to the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth he's changed the color of his oak leaves in the interim. He had a new novelette under his arm—modern war with a Philippine setting again after his excursion into the past in this issue.

SOME months ago we printed an item in a paragraph headed "Circulation Notes" stating that a lieutenant in Goering's *Luftwaffe* had complained because of his inability to get *Adventure* any longer on Berlin newsstands. Reader Tommy Lempertz, who had relayed the complaint to us, didn't offer an explanation. Now a second Lempertz letter arrives on USO stationery from San Diego. Cal. where he is now stationed in Naval Air. We quote—

> In case you may be wondering how anyone in the *Luftwaffe* happened to be reading *Adventure* in the first place—
>
> I was living in Paris in 1931, had been there since 1929, and had a job on the Chicago *Tribune* there. I went to Germany to visit some relatives in Rendsburg (Schleswig-Holstein) who were glad enough to see an American grandson drop in. Well, one of the neighbors' sons came to call and give his school English a workout, much I suspect, as people

here try their highschool French on any Frenchman at hand.

This chap was a glider pilot and evidently wanted the American idiom and not the English classics that he was studying. I had seen an *Adventure* in a kiosk in the Hauptbanhoff in Hamburg and got it to him, not, however, without a lecture on American magazines explaining that ours was on the *must* list. Well, I saw him once more in Paris when he looked me up. After some correspondence, we got quite well acquainted. Later, after I had returned to this country, I was shooting pictures in Alamo in Lower California, near San Ignacio and he wrote me telling me that he was in the *Luftwaffe* and was disappointed at not being able to get *Adventure* any more. He was a nice guy and I can't help but hope, somehow, in spite of everything, that he survives this war. He seemed to appreciate a good magazine anyway.

Heard Harold Lamb on the radio some time ago for the Los Angeles Public Library. Remember when his stuff first started coming out in *Adventure?*

Sincerely,

Tommy Lempertz

You bet we do remember, Tommy, which brings up the subject of what some of the veteran members of our Writers' Brigade are up to these days and gives us a chance to explain why some of them weren't available for inclusion in that February "Old Timers' Issue." Take Lamb, for instance. He's been tied up in Washington on special assignment for months and sees no end in view to the book he's been working on for two years, much less time to turn out fiction. . . . Jacland Marmur, William E. Barrett Sidney Herschel Small and Lawrence G. Blochman are all busy in the toils of ex-*Adventure* associate Elmer Davis in the OWI. . . . William Edward Hayes is Assistant Director of Passenger Operations, Railway Division, Office of Defense Transport. He dropped in the other day for a brief visit and to say that he was getting enough material in his job to keep twenty fiction writers busy but he hadn't had time to use any of it. . . . Gordon MacCreagh's belated Christmas card arrives from "Somewhere in Africa" with a similar gripe. "Pretty damn near everything here is taboo by the censor," he writes, "but wait till this is all over. I'm accumulating some of the richest material any writer ever had access to." When MacCreagh left for Africa the following item appeared in his hometown Florida newspaper in St. Petersburg.

In the uncertain future— it might be anywhere up to 10 days if he goes by Clipper, about five weeks if he goes by water—Gordon MacCreagh, 2231 West Harbor drive, expects to be in Eritrea, Africa, on the coast of the Red sea.

A week ago he was planning on spending the summer in St. Petersburg and yesterday found him in the last stages of hectic packing, ready to leave for Dayton, O., today for further orders.

MacCreagh, who won't divulge the nature of his trip but insists it is civilian, not military orders, says the trip came as a complete surprise about a week ago. He was asked by air mail query whether or not he would be interested in such a trip and he replied at once in the affirmative.

He claims the main reason he has been asked to go to Eritrea, which is once more in British possession, is because he knows that part of the world well, the people and their customs, and can understand and talk their Tigrina dialect, Amharic and Swahili.

He harbors no illusions about the trip, which will be of about one year duration, naming Eritrea "one of the hell spots of Africa" and recalling how Italians died like flies when sent there by Mussolini.

However, as explorer and author of adventure stories, articles and books, he must feel sort of a thrill as he contemplates the trip. He has explored in Borneo, South America, Abyssinia, and his books include "White Waters and Black," "The Last of Free Africa" and "Big Game in the Shan States."

He served in the first World War as a member of the U. S. Air Force and the current issue of Country Gentleman magazine carries an article written by him on the Burma road which he says "he knew when it was nothing more than a mule track."

Orders in Dayton will tell him whether he is to proceed to Africa by plane or boat and in the meantime, before arriving at his destination, he has to learn the Italian language. He says it can be done easily if he goes by boat but if by plane—well, that will be a task.

While he is away, Mrs. MacCreagh will remain in St. Petersburg.

Mac's card appends the news that he

has just learned Commander Ellsberg is "not too far away." . . . The Commander, now a captain, of course, was front page news late last summer when word arrived that he had just successfully concluded supervision of one of the greatest mass salvage operations ever accomplished in naval history—the raising at Masawa, Eritrea, of the giant floating drydock sabotaged and scuttled by the fleeing Italians who had boasted that they'd done their destruction so thoroughly it could never be used again. We quote the following excerpt from the AP account of the feat which appeared at the time—

> Within an hour after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Ellsberg, then a reserve commander, headed for Washington. He went on active duty the next day. In February he left New York and arrived in Eritrea in March. Then he put on a diver's suit and descended to the ocean floor for a look at the big drydock.
>
> Ellsberg then had thirteen American civilian divers under the command of Captain William Reed, of California, a former naval officer. They had only two diving suits among them and no salvage ship or other equipment. They found the dock had eight watertight compartments. Into each the Italians had dropped a 200-pound bomb, one a dud.
>
> They began diving May 11 and had the dock afloat May 20, completing "the impossible" in nine days. The task naturally had to be accomplished by unorthodox means. None of the holes except those on top air-tight locks was repaired. With pumps and air compressors borrowed from the British, Ellsberg floated the dock and, lacking other workers, used the salvage men to repair the damage.
>
> Although now fifty years old and much grayer and thinner, due to the Eritrean heat, which he recorded personally at 149 degrees at the center of the dock and 163 degrees on the steel plates where the men were working. Ellsberg still dives regularly. He said today he considers all the Italian and German vessels in Masaua can be salvaged.
>
> Most of them were of the 5,000-ton freighter-passenger class. There were also two big 14,000-ton German passenger ships, the Liebenfels and a former Hansa liner.

Some of which indicates a few reasons why we haven't been seeing as much fiction from men who were regular contributors before the war as we once did. But better times will come and when the big job is done they'll be back in the fold with new tales to tell. You can bank on it!—K.S.W.

CONTRABAND

(Continued from page 109)

suddenly alive with fear. "They will sweat it out of me. They can learn anything."

This was not according to plan; this man was too young, too untried. He should never have been sent. The blind man leaned tensely forward. "They can learn nothing!" he said fiercely. "They cannot touch you. They can pull your arms from their sockets; they can break your legs; they can even take away your —your sight. But the real you is deep inside. That they cannot touch. This they do not know, and this is their weakness."

"I am a dentist," repeated the young voice and now it was calmly proud. "I know nothing, only that I am a dentist."

Good, it was all once again according to plan. This was the correct answer. The blind man raised his face. "Thank you, sir; God bless you."

The blind man felt lips brushing his cheek; heard the whispered words close to his ear, "And God bless you, blind man," and then only footsteps hurrying away.

No, that was bad, not according to order, the man should never have kissed his cheek. They were all about; they might be watching. Still, the blind man smiled and raised his fingers to his cheek. In a nation of individuals born to freedom, things were not always according to order. It was their mark, the mark of the unconquered and the unconquerable.

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Request:—I am taking the liberty of writing you for some information about a herd of the old Texas longhorn cattle I have read were preserved in a park near Cache, Okla. by the Government. I am planning on making a trip down through Oklahoma this summer and would like to know if it would be possible to see this herd of cattle. Can you tell me anything about them? How many head there are, where to go and how to get there, etc.

—J. W. Walker
5240 Race Ave.
Chicago, Ill.

Reply by J. W. Whiteaker:—The number of longhorn cattle still in existence is very few. There were some on the 101 Ranch owned by the Miller Bros. Wild West Show in Kay Co., near the town of Ponca City. There may be some of the cattle on the ranch but the show has been out of the public view for several years now.

There are a few ranches in Texas that have a few of the oldtime longhorn cattle on their domain. On the L. A. Schreiner ranch near Kerrville, Texas there a dozen or so descendants of the old Spanish longhorns. The original cattle of Texas were the longhorns of Spanish origin and the scrub stock of British breed that were later introduced with the coming of the Anglo-American colonists. In no other respect has the agricultural industry of Texas made greater strides than in the breeding up of its cattle to present day standards.

The Schreiners are very fine people and would be glad to have visitors to drop in on them. Kerrville is quite a resort for fishing and hunting.

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Send each question *direct* to the expert in charge of the section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. **Do Not** send questions to the magazine. Be definite; explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question. The magazine does not assume any responsibility. **No Reply** will be made to requests for partners, financial backing or employment.

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Notice: Many of our *Ask Adventure* experts are now engaged in government service of one kind or another. Some are on active duty in the Army or Navy, others serving in an executive or advisory capacity on various of the boards and offices which have been set up to hasten the nation's war effort. Almost without exception these men have consented to remain on our staff, carry on their work for the magazine if humanly possible, but with the understanding that for the duration such work is of secondary importance to their official duties. This is as it should be, so when you don't receive answers to queries as promptly as you have in the past please be patient. And remember that foreign mails are slow and uncertain these days, many curtailed drastically. Bear with us and we'll continue to try to serve you as speedily as possible.

ASK ADVENTURE EXPERTS

SPORTS AND HOBBIES

Archery—EARL B. POWELL, care of *Adventure.*

Baseball—FREDERICK LIEB, care of *Adventure.*

Basketball—STANLEY CARHART, 99 Broad St., Matawan, N. J.

Boxing—LIEUT. COL. JOHN V. GROMBACH, 1619 Mass. Ave. N. W., Wash., D. C.

Camping—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Canoeing: *paddling, sailing, cruising, regattas*—EDGAR S. PERKINS, 1325 So. Main St., Princeton, Ill.

Coins: *and Medals*—WILLIAM L. CLARK, American Numismatic Society, Broadway at 156th St., N. Y. C.

Dogs—FREEMAN LLOYD, care of *Adventure.*

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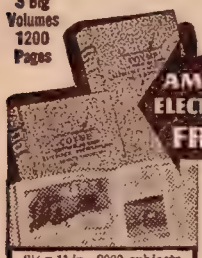

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Health Building Activities, Hiking — DR CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, *care of Adventure*.

Motor Boating—GERALD T. WHITE, Montville, N. J.

Motorcycling—*regulations, mechanics, racing*—CHARLES M. DODGE, 70 Colonial Sq., Burlington, Vt.

Mountain Climbing—THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 952 No. Hudson Ave., Hollywood, Calif.

Old Songs—ROBERT WHITE, 913 W. 7th St., Los Angeles, Calif.

Old-Time Sailoring—CHAS. H. HALL, 446 Ocean Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Rifles, Pistols, Revolvers: *foreign and American*—DONEGAN WIGGINS, 170 Liberty Rd., Salem, Oregon.

Shotguns, American and Foreign, Wing Shooting and Field Trials: ROY S. TINNEY, c/o *Adventure*.

Small Boating: *skiffs, outboard, small launch, river and lake cruising*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, Calif.

Swimming—LOUIS DEB. HANDLEY, 115 West 11th St., N. Y. C.

Swords: *spears, pole arms and armor*—CAPT. R. E. GARDNER, care of *Adventure*.

Tournament Fly and Bait Casting—"CHIEF" STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Maine.

Track—JACKSON SCHOLZ, R. D. No. 1. Doylestown, Pa.

Woodcraft—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Wrestling—MURL E. THRUSH, New York Athletic Club, 59th St. and 7th Ave., New York City.

Yachting—A. R. KNAUER, 6720 Jeffery Ave., Chicago, Ill.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS

Anthropology—*American, north of the Panama Canal, customs, dress, architecture; pottery and decorative arts, weapons and implements, fetishism, social divisions*—ARTHUR WOODWARD, Los Angeles Museum Exposition Park, Los Angeles, Calif.

Aviation: *airplanes, airships, airways and landing fields, contests, aero clubs, insurance, laws, licenses, operating data, schools, foreign activities, publications, parachutes, gliders* — MAJOR FALK HARMEL, 709 Longfellow St., Washington, D. C.

Entomology: *insects and spiders; venomous and disease-carrying insects*—DR. S. W. FROST, 465 E. Foster Ave., State College, Pa.

Tropical Forestry: *tropical forests and products*—WM. R. BARBOUR, 1091 Springdale Rd., Atlanta, Ga.

Herpetology: *reptiles and amphibians*—CLIFFORD H. POPE, care of *Adventure*.

Marine Architecture: *ship modeling*—CHAS. H. HALL, 446 Ocean Ave., Brooklyn N. Y.

Mining, Prospecting, and Precious Stones: *anywhere in No. America. Outfitting; any mineral, metallic or non-metallic*—VICTOR SHAW, 11628¾ Mayfield Ave., West Los Angeles, Calif.

The Merchant Marine—GORDON MACALLISTER, care of *Adventure.*

Ornithology: *birds; their habits and distribution*—DAVIS QUINN, 5 Minerva Pl., Bronx, N. Y.

Photography: *outfitting, work in out-of-the-way places; general information*—PAUL L. ANDERSON, 36 Washington St., East Orange, N. J.

Radio: *telegraphy, telephony, history, receiver construction, portable sets*—DONALD MCNICOL, care of *Adventure.*

Railroads: *in the United States, Mexico and Canada*—R. T. NEWMAN, 701 N. Main St., Paris, Ill.

Sawmilling—HAPSBURG LIEBE, care of *Adventure.*

Sunken Treasure: *treasure ships; deep-sea diving; salvage operations and equipment*—LIEUTENANT HARRY E. RIESEBERG, care of *Adventure.*

Taxidermy—EDWARD B. LANG, 156 Joralemon St., Belleville, N. J.

Wildcrafting and Trapping — RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, Calif.

MILITARY, NAVAL AND POLICE

Federal Investigation Activities: *Secret Service, etc.*—FRANCIS H. BENT, 43 Elm Pl., Red Bank, N. J.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police—ALEC CAVADAS, King Edw., H. S., Vancouver, B. C.

State Police—FRANCIS H. BENT, 43 Elm Pl., Red Bank, N. J.

U. S. Marine Corps—MAJOR F. W. HOPKINS, care of *Adventure.*

U. S. Navy—LIEUT. DURAND KIEFER, care of *Adventure.*

GEOGRAPHICAL SUBJECTS

Philippine Islands — BUCK CONNER, Conner Field, Quartzsite, Ariz.

★New Guinea—L. P. B. ARMIT, care of *Adventure.*

★New Zealand: Cook Island, Samoa—TOM L. MILLS, 27 Bowen St., Feilding, New Zealand.

★Australia and Tasmania—ALAN FOLEY, 169 Castlereagh St., Sydney, Australia.

★South Sea Islands—WILLIAM MCCREADIE, "Ingle Nook," 39 Cornelia St., Wiley Park, N. S. W., Australia.

Hawaii—JOHN SNELL, Deputy Administrator, Defense Savings Staff, 1055 Bishop St., Honolulu, Hawaii.

Madagascar—RALPH LINTON, Dept. of Anthropology, Columbia University, New York City.

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(Continued on page 129)

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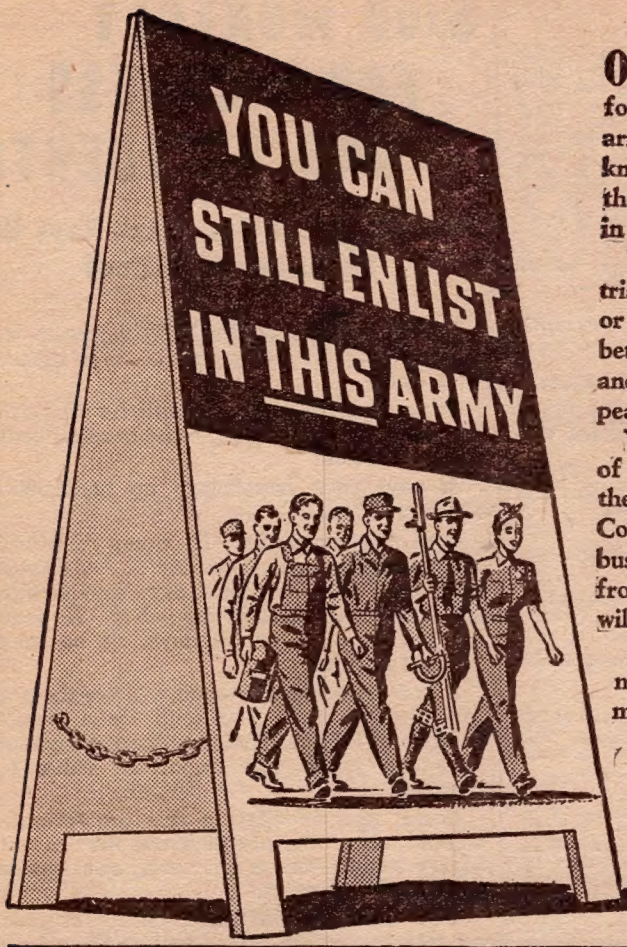

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